A

LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE

ABBE RAYNAL,

ON THE AFFAIRS OF

NORTH-AMERICA.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

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IN WHICH

THE MISTAKES IN THE ABBE's ACCOUNT

OF THE

REVOLUTION OF AMERICA

ARE CORRECTED AND CLEARED UP.

BY THOMAS PAINE,

SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CONGRESS DURING THE AMERICAN WAR, AND AUTHOR OF COMMON SENSE, AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

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M.DCC.XCI.

INTRODUCTION.

A LONDON tranſlation of an original work in French, by the Abbe Raynal, which treats of the Revolution of North America, having been reprinted in Philadelphia and other parts of the continent, and as the diſtance at which the Abbe is placed from the American theatre of war and politics, has occaſioned him to miſtake ſeveral facts, or, miſconceive the cauſes or principles by which they were produced; the following tract, therefore, is publiſhed with a view to rectify them, and prevent even accidental errors intermixing with hiſtory, under the ſanction of time and ſilence.

THE editor of the London edition has entitled it, "*The Revolution of America*, by the ABBE

RAYNAL," and the American printers have followed the example. But I have underſtood, and I believe my information juſt, that the piece, which is more properly reflections on the revolution, was unfairly purloined from the printer which the Abbe employed, or from the manuſcript copy, and is only part of a larger work then in the preſs, or preparing for it. The perſon who procured it appears to have been an Engliſhman, and though, in an advertiſement prefixt to the London edition, he has endeavoured to gloſs over the embezzlement with profeſſions of patriotiſm, and to ſoften it with high encomiums on the author, yet the action, in any view in which it can be placed, is illiberal and unpardonable.

" IN the courſe of his travels," ſays he, " the " tranſlator happily ſucceeded in obtaining a copy " of this exquiſite little piece, which has not yet " made its appearance from any preſs. He pub- " liſhs a French edition, in favour of thoſe who " will feel its eloquent reaſoning more forcibly in " its native language, at the ſame time with the " following tranſlation of it; in which he has " been deſirous, perhaps in vain, that all the " warmth, the grace, the ſtrength, the dignity of " the original, ſhould not be loſt. And he flat- " ters himſelf, that the indulgence of the illu- " ſtrious hiſtorian will not be wanting to a man,

" who

" who, of his own motion, has taken the liberty " to give this compoſition to the public, only " from a ſtrong perſuaſion, that this momentous " argument will be uſeful, in a critical conjec- " ture, to that country which he loves with an " ardour, that can be exceeded only by the " nobler flame which burns in the boſom of the " philanthropic author, for the freedom and hap- " pineſs of all the countries upon earth."

THIS plauſibility of ſetting off a diſhonourable action, may paſs for patriotiſm and ſound principles with thoſe who do not enter into its demerits, and whoſe intereſt is not injured nor their happineſs affected thereby. But it is more than probable, notwithſtanding the declarations it contains, that the copy was obtained for the ſake of profitting by the ſale of a new and popular work, and that the profeſſions are but a garb to the fraud.

IT may with propriety be remarked, that in all countries where literature is protected, and it never can flouriſh where it is not, the works of an author are his legal property; and to treat letters in any other light than this, is to baniſh them from the country or ſtrangle them in the birth.— The embezzlement from the Abbe Raynal, was, it is true, committed by one country upon another, and therefore ſhews no defect in the laws

of either. But it is nevertheleſs a breach of civil manners and literary juſtice; neither can it be any apology, that becauſe the countries are at war, literature ſhall be entitled to depredation*.

But the foreſtalling the Abbe's publication by London editions, both in French and Engliſh, and thereby not only defrauding him and throwing an expenſive publication on his hands by anticipating the ſale, are only the ſmaller injuries which ſuch conduct may occaſion. A man's opinions, whether written or in thought, are his own until he pleaſes to publiſh them himſelf; and it is adding cruelty to injuſtice to make him the author of what future reflection or better information might occaſion him to ſuppreſs or amend. There are declarations and ſentiments in the Abbe's piece, which, for my own part, I did not expect to find, and ſuch as himſelf, on a reviſal, might have ſeen occaſion to

* *The ſtate of literature in America muſt one day become a ſubject of legiſlative conſideration. Hitherto it hath been a diſintereſted volunteer in the ſervice of the revolution, and no man thought of profits: but when peace ſhall give time and opportunity for ſtudy, the country will deprive itſelf of the honour and ſervice of letters and the improvement of ſcience, unleſs ſufficient laws are made to prevent depredations on literary property. It is well worth remarking, that Ruſſia, who but a few years ago, was ſcarcely known in Europe, owes a large ſhare of her preſent greatneſs to the cloſe attention ſhe has paid, and the wiſe encouragement ſhe has given, to every branch of ſcience and learning; and we have almoſt the ſame inſtance in France, in the reign of Lewis XIV.*

change;

change; but the anticipated piracy effectually prevented him the opportunity, and precipitated him into difficulties, which, had it not been for ſuch ungenerous fraud, might not have happened.

THIS mode of making an author appear before his time, will appear ſtill more ungenerous, when we conſider how exceedingly few men there are in any country, who can at once, and without the aid of reflection and reviſal, combine warm paſſions with a cool temper, and the full expanſion of imagination with the natural and neceſſary gravity of judgment, ſo as to be rightly balanced within themſelves, and to make a reader feel fancy, and underſtand juſtly at the ſame time. To call three powers of the mind into action at once, in a manner that neither ſhall interrupt, and that each ſhall aid and vigorate the other, is a talent very rarely poſſeſſed.

IT often happens that the weight of an argument is loſt by the wit of ſetting it off; or the judgment diſordered by an intemperate irritation of the paſſions: yet a certain degree of animation muſt be felt by the writer, and raiſed in the reader, in order to intereſt the attention; and a ſufficient ſcope given to the imagination, to enable it to create in the mind a ſight of the perſons, characters, and circumſtances of the ſubject; for without

without theſe, the judgment will feel little or no excitement to office, and its determinations will be cold, ſluggiſh, and imperfect. But if either or both of the two former are raiſed too high, or heated too much, the judgment will be joſtled from its ſeat, and the whole matter, however important in itſelf, will diminiſh into a pantomime of the mind, in which we create images that promote no other purpoſe than amuſement.

The Abbe's writings bear evident marks of that extenſion and rapidneſs of thinking, and quickneſs of ſenſation, which of all others require reviſal, and the more particularly ſo when applied to the living characters of nations or individuals in a ſtate of war. The leaſt miſinformation or miſconception leads to ſome wrong concluſion, and an error believed becomes the progenitor of others. And as the Abbe has ſuffered ſome inconveniences in France, by miſtating certain circumſtances of the war, and the characters of the parties therein, it becomes ſome apology for him that thoſe errors were precipitated into the world by the avarice of an ungenerous enemy.

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TO an author of ſuch diſtinguiſhed reputation as the Abbe Raynal, it might very well become me to apologize for the preſent undertaking; but as *to be right* is the firſt wiſh of philoſophy, and the firſt principle of hiſtory, he will, I preſume, accept from me a declaration of my motives, which are thoſe of doing juſtice, in preference to any complimental apology, I might otherwiſe make.—The Abbe, in the courſe of his work, has, in ſome inſtances, extolled without a reaſon, and wounded without a cauſe. He has given fame where it was not deſerved, and withheld it where it was juſtly due; and appears to be ſo frequently in and out of temper with his ſubjects and parties, that few or none of them are deciſively and uniformly marked.

It is yet too ſoon to write the hiſtory of the revolution, and whoever attempts it precipitately, will unavoidably miſtake characters and circumſtances, and involve himſelf in error and difficulty. Things like men are ſeldom underſtood rightly at firſt ſight. But the Abbe is wrong even in the foundation of his work: that is, he has miſconceived and miſtated the cauſes which produced the rupture between England and her then colonies, and which led on, ſtep by ſtep, unſtudied and uncontrived on the part of America, to a revolution, which has engaged the attention, and affected the intereſt, of Europe.

To prove this, I ſhall bring forward a paſſage, which, though placed towards the latter part of the Abbe's work, is more intimately connected with the beginning; and in which, ſpeaking of the original cauſe of the diſpute, he declares himſelf in the following manner—

"None," ſays he, "of thoſe energetic cauſes, "which have produced ſo many revolutions upon the "globe, exiſted in North-America. Neither religion "nor laws had there been outraged. The blood of "martyrs or patriots had not there ſtreamed from ſcaf-"folds. Morals had not there been inſulted. Man-"ners, cuſtoms, habits, no object dear to nations, "had there been the ſport of ridicule. Arbitrary "power had not there torn any inhabitant from the "arms of his family and his friends, to drag him to a "dreary dungeon. Public order had not been there "inverted. The principles of adminiſtration had not "been changed there; and the maxims of government "had there always remained the ſame. The whole

"queſtion

" queſtion was reduced to the knowing whether the " mother country had, or had not a right to lay, " directly or indirectly, a ſlight tax upon the colonies."

On this extraordinary paſſage, it may not be improper, in general terms, to remark, that none can feel like thoſe who ſuffer; and that for a man to be a competent judge of the provocative, or as the Abbe ſtyles them, the energetic cauſes of the revolution, he muſt have reſided in America.

The Abbe in ſaying that the ſeveral particulars he has enumerated, did not exiſt in America, and neglecting to point out the particular period, in which he means they did not exiſt, reduces thereby his declaration to a nullity, by taking away all meaning from the paſſage.

They did not exiſt in 1763, and they all exiſted before 1776; conſequently as there was a time when they did *not*, and another when they *did* exiſt, the *time when* conſtitutes the eſſence of the fact, and not to give it, is to withhold the only evidence, which proves the declaration right or wrong, and on which it muſt ſtand or fall. But the declaration, as it now appears, unaccompanied by time, has an effect in holding out to the world, that there was no real cauſe for the revolution, becauſe it denies the exiſtence of all thoſe cauſes, which are ſuppoſed to be juſtifiable, and which the Abbe ſtyles energetic.

I confeſs myſelf exceedingly at a loſs to find out the time to which the Abbe alludes; becauſe, in another part of the work, in ſpeaking of the ſtamp act, which was paſſed in 1764, he ſtyles it " An *uſurpation* of the

Americans *moſt precious and ſacred rights*." Conſequently he here admits the moſt energetic of all cauſes, that is, *an uſurpation of the moſt precious and ſacred rights*, to have exiſted in America twelve years before the declaration of independence, and ten years before the breaking out of hoſtilities.—The time, therefore, in which the paragraph is true, muſt be antecedent to the ſtamp act, but as at that time there was no revolution nor any idea of one, it conſequently applies without a meaning; and as it cannot, on the Abbe's own principle, be applied to any time *after* the ſtamp act, it is therefore a wandering ſolitary paragraph connected with nothing and at variance with every thing.

The ſtamp act, it is true, was repealed in two years after it was paſſed, but it was immediately followed by one of infinitely more miſchievous magnitude, I mean the declaratory act, which aſſerted the right, as it was ſtyled, of the Britiſh Parliament, "*to bind America in "all caſes whatſoever.*"

If then the ſtamp act was an uſurpation of the Americans moſt precious and ſacred rights, the declaratory act left them no right at all; and contained the full grown ſeeds of the moſt deſpotic government ever exerciſed in the world. It placed America not only in the loweſt, but in the baſeſt ſtate of vaſſalage; becauſe it demanded an unconditional ſubmiſſion in every thing, or as the act expreſſes it, *in all caſes whatſoever:* And what renders this act the more offenſive, is, that it appears to have been paſſed as an act of mercy; truly then it may be ſaid, that *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*

All

ALL the original charters from the Crown of England, under the faith of which, the adventurers from the old world ſettled in the new, were by this act diſplaced from their foundations; becauſe, contrary to the nature of them, which was that of a compact, they were now made ſubject to repeal or alteration at the mere will of one party only. The whole condition of America was thus put into the hands of the Parliament or the Miniſtry, without leaving to her the leaſt right in any caſe whatſoever.

THERE is no deſpotiſm to which this iniquitous law did not extend; and though it might have been convenient in the execution of it, to have conſulted manners and habits, the principle of the act made all tyranny legal. It ſtopt nowhere. It went to every thing. It took in with it the whole life of a man, or, if I may ſo expreſs it, an eternity of circumſtances. It is the nature of law to require obedience, but this demanded ſervitude; and the condition of an American, under the operation of it, was not that of a ſubject, but a vaſſal. Tyranny has often been eſtabliſhed *without* law, and ſometimes *againſt* it, but the hiſtory of mankind does not produce another inſtance, in which it has been eſtabliſhed *by* law. It is an audacious outrage upon civil government, and cannot be too much expoſed, in order to be ſufficiently deteſted.

NEITHER could it be ſaid after this, that the legiſlature of that country any longer made laws for this, but that it gave out commands; ſo wherein differed an act of Parliament conſtructed on this principle, and operating

ing in this manner, over an unrepreſented people, from the orders of a military eſtabliſhment?

THE Parliament of England, with reſpect to America, was not ſeptennial but *perpetual*. It appeared to the latter a body always in being. Its election or its expiration were to her the ſame as if its members ſucceeded by inheritance, or went out by death, or lived for ever, or were appointed to it as a matter of office. Therefore, for the people of England to have any juſt conception of the mind of America, reſpecting this extraordinary act, they muſt ſuppoſe all election and expiration in that country to ceaſe for ever, and the preſent Parliament, its heirs, &c. to be perpetual; in this caſe, I aſk, what would the moſt clamorous of them think, were an act to be paſſed, declaring the right of *ſuch a Parliament* to bind *them* in all caſes whatſoever? For this word *whatſoever* would go as effectually to their *Magna Charta*, *Bill of Rights*, *Trial by Juries*, &c. as it went to the charters and forms of government in America.

I AM perſuaded, that the Gentleman to whom I addreſs theſe remarks, will not, after the paſſing this act, ſay, "That the *principles* of adminiſtration had not "been *changed* in America, and that the maxims of "government had there been *always the ſame*." For here is, in principle, a total overthrow of the whole; and not a ſubverſion only, but an annihilation of the foundation of liberty, and abſolute domination eſtabliſhed in its ſtead.

THE Abbe likewiſe ſtates the caſe exceedingly wrong and injurioufly, when he ſays, "that *the whole* queſtion

"was

" was reduced to the knowing whether the mother " country had, or had not, a right to lay, directly or " indirectly, a *ſlight* tax upon the colonies."—This was *not the whole* of the queſtion; neither was the *quantity* of the tax the object, either to the Miniſtry or to the Americans. It was the principle, of which the tax made but a part, and the quantity ſtill leſs, that formed the ground on which America oppoſed.

THE tax on tea, which is the tax here alluded to, was neither more or leſs than an experiment to eſtabliſh the practice of the declaratory law upon; modelled into the more faſhionable phraſe of *the univerſal ſupremacy of Parliament*. For, until this time, the declaratory law had lain dormant, and the framers of it had contented themſelves with barely declaring an opinion.

THEREFORE the *whole* queſtion with America, in the opening of the diſpute, was, Shall we be bound in all caſes whatſoever by the Britiſh Parliament, or ſhall we not? For ſubmiſſion to the tea or tax act implied an acknowledgment of the declaratory act, or, in other words, of the univerſal ſupremacy of Parliament, which, as they never intended to do, it was neceſſary they ſhould oppoſe it in its firſt ſtage of execution.

IT is probable the Abbe has been led into this miſtake by peruſing detached pieces in ſome of the American news-papers; for, in a caſe where all were intereſted, every one had a right to give his opinion; there were many who, with the beſt intentions, did not chuſe the beſt, nor indeed the true ground, to defend

fend their cauſe upon. They felt themſelves right by a general impulſe, without being able to ſeparate, analyze, and arrange the parts.

I AM ſomewhat unwilling to examine too minutely into the whole of this extraordinary paſſage of the Abbe, leſt I ſhould appear to treat it with ſeverity; otherwiſe I could ſhow that not a ſingle declaration is juſtly founded. For inſtance, the reviving an obſolete act of the reign of Henry the Eighth, and fitting it to the Americans, by authority of which they were to be ſeized and brought from America to England, and there impriſoned and tried for any ſuppoſed offences, was, in the worſt ſenſe of the words, *to tear them, by the arbitrary power of Parliament, from the arms of their families and friends, and drag them not only to dreary but diſtant dungeons.* Yet this act was contrived ſome years before the breaking out of hoſtilities. And again, though the blood of martyrs and patriots had not ſtreamed on the ſcaffolds, it ſtreamed in the ſtreets, in the maſſacre of the inhabitants of Boſton, by the Britiſh ſoldiery, in the year 1770.

HAD the Abbe ſaid, that the cauſes which produced the revolution in America were originally *different* from thoſe which produced revolutions in other parts of the globe, he had been right. Here the value and quality of liberty, the nature of government, and the dignity of man, were known and underſtood, and the attachment of the Americans to theſe principles produced the revolution as a natural and almoſt unavoidable conſequence. They had no particular family to ſet up or pull down. Nothing of perſonality was incorporated

corporated with their cauſe. They ſtarted even-handed with each other, and went no faſter into the ſeveral ſtages of it than they were driven by the unrelenting and imperious conduct of Britain. Nay, in the laſt act, the declaration of independence, they had nearly been too late; for had it not been declared at the exact time it was, I ſee no period in their affairs ſince, in which it could have been declared with the ſame effect, and probably not all.

But the object being formed before the reverſe of fortune took place, that is, before the operations of the gloomy compaign of 1776, their honor, their intereſt, their every thing, called loudly on them to maintain it; and that glow of thought and energy of heart, which even a diſtant proſpect of independence inſpires, gave confidence to their hopes, and reſolution to their conduct, which a ſtate of dependence could never have reached. They looked forward to happier days and ſcenes of reſt, and qualified the hardſhips of the campaign by contemplating the eſtabliſhment of their new born ſyſtem.

If, on the other hand, we take a review of what part Britain has acted, we ſhall find every thing which ought to make a nation bluſh. The moſt vulgar abuſe, accompanied by that ſpecies of haughtineſs, which diſtinguiſhes the hero of a mob from the character of a gentleman. It was equally as much from her manners as from her injuſtice that ſhe loſt the colonies. By the latter ſhe provoked their principles, by the former ſhe wore out their temper; and it ought to be held out as an example to the world, to ſhow how neceſſary it

is to conduct the buſineſs of government with civility. In ſhort, other revolutions may have originated in caprice or generated in ambition; but here, the moſt unoffending humility was tortured into rage, and the infancy of exiſtence made to weep.

A UNION ſo extenſive, continued, and determined, ſuffering with patience and never in deſpair, could not have been produced by common cauſes. It muſt be ſomething capable of reaching the whole ſoul of man, and arming it with perpetual energy. In vain is it to look for precedents among the revolutions of former ages, to find out, by compariſon, the cauſes of this. The ſpring, the progreſs, the object, the conſequences, nay, the men, their habits of thinking, and all the circumſtances of the country, are different. Thoſe of other nations are, in general, little more than the hiſtory of their quarrels; they are marked by no important character in the annals of events; mixt in the maſs of general matters, they occupy but a common page; and, while the chief of the ſucceſsful partizans ſtept into power, the plundered multitude ſat down and ſorrowed. Few, very few of them, are accompanied with reformation, either in government or manners; many of them with the moſt conſummate profligacy. Triumph on the one ſide, and miſery on the other, were the only events. Pains, puniſhments, torture, and death, were made the buſineſs of mankind, until compaſſion, the faireſt aſſociate of the heart, was driven from its place, and the eye, accuſtomed to continual cruelty, could behold it without offence.

BUT as the principles of the preſent revolution differed

fered from thoſe which preceded it, ſo likewiſe has the conduct of America, both in government and war. Neither the foul finger of diſgrace, nor the bloody hand of vengeance, has hitherto put a blot upon her fame. Her victories have received a luſtre from a greatneſs of lenity, and her laws been permitted to ſlumber where they might juſtly have awakened to puniſh. War, ſo much the trade of the world, has here been only the buſineſs of neceſſity; and when the neceſſity ſhall ceaſe, her very enemies muſt confeſs, that as ſhe drew the ſword in her juſt defence, ſhe uſed it without cruelty, and ſheathed it without revenge.

As it is not my deſign to extend theſe remarks to a hiſtory, I ſhall now take my leave of this paſſage of the Abbe, with an obſervation, which, until ſomething unfolds itſelf to convince me otherwiſe, I cannot avoid believing to be true;—which is, that it was the fixt determination of the Britiſh Cabinet to quarrel with America at all events.

THEY (the members who compoſe the Cabinet) had no doubt of ſucceſs, if they could once bring it to the iſſue of a battle; and they expected from a conqueſt, what they could neither propoſe with decency, nor hope for by negociation. The charters and conſtitutions of the colonies were become to them matters of offence, and their rapid progreſs in property and population were diſguſtingly beheld as the growing and natural means of independence. They ſaw no way to retain them long but by reducing them in time. A conqueſt would at once have made them

both lords and landlords; and put them in poſſeſſion both of the revenue and the rental. The whole trouble of government would have ceaſed in a victory, and a final end been put to remonſtrance and debate. The experience of the ſtamp act had taught them how to quarrel with the advantages of cover and convenience, and they had nothing to do but to renew the ſcene, and put contention into motion. They hoped for a rebellion, and they made one. They expected a declaration of independence, and they were not diſappointed. But after this, they looked for victory, and they obtained a defeat.

If this be taken as the generating cauſe of the conteſt, then is every part of the conduct of the Britiſh Miniſtry conſiſtent from the commencement of the diſpute, until the ſigning the treaty of Paris, after which, conqueſt becoming doubtful, they retreated to negociation, and were again defeated.

Though the Abbe poſſeſſes and diſplays great powers of genius, and is a maſter of ſtyle and language, he ſeems not to pay equal attention to the office of an hiſtorian. His facts are coldly and careleſsly ſtated. They neither inform the reader nor intereſt him. Many of them are erroneous, and moſt of them defective and obſcure. It is undoubtedly both an ornament and a uſeful addition to hiſtory to accompany it with maxims and reflections. They afford likewiſe an agreeable change to the ſtyle and a more diverſified manner of expreſſion: but it is abſolutely neceſſary that the root from whence they ſpring, or the foundations on which they are raiſed, ſhould be well attended to, which in this

this work they are not. The Abbe haſtens through his narrations as if he was glad to get from them, that he may enter the more copious field of eloquence and imagination.

The actions of Trenton and Princeton in New-Jerſey, in December 1776, and January following, on which the fate of America ſtood for a while trembling on the point of ſuſpence, and from which the moſt important conſequences followed, are compriſed within a ſingle paragraph faintly conceived, and barron of character, circumſtance, and deſcription.

" On the 25th of December," ſays the Abbe, " they " (the Americans) croſſed the Delaware, and fell *acci-* " *dentally* upon Trenton, which was occupied by fifteen " hundred of the twelve thouſand Heſſians, ſold in ſo " baſe a manner by their avaricious maſter, to the King " of Great Britain. This corps was *maſſacred*, taken, " or diſperſed. Eight days after, three Engliſh regi- " ments were in like manner driven from Princeton, " but after having better ſupported their reputation " than the foreign troops in their pay."

This is all the account which is given of theſe moſt intereſting events. The Abbe has preceded them by two or three pages on the military operations of both armies, from the time of General Howe arriving before New-York from Halifax, and the vaſt reinforcements of Britiſh and foreign troops with Lord Howe from England. But in theſe, there is ſo much miſtake, and ſo many omiſſions, that, to ſet them right, muſt be the buſineſs of hiſtory, and not of a letter. The action of Long-Iſland is but barely hinted at, and the operations

tions at the White Plains wholly omitted: as are likewiſe the attack and loſs of fort Waſhington, with a garriſon of about two thouſand five hundred men, and the precipitate evacuation of Fort Lee, in conſequence thereof; which loſſes were in a great meaſure the cauſe of the retreat through the Jerſies to the Dalaware, a diſtance of about ninety miles. Neither is the manner of the retreat deſcribed, which, from the ſeaſon of the year, the nature of the country, the nearneſs of the two armies, (ſometimes within ſight and ſhot of each other for ſuch a length of way) the rear of the one employed in pulling down bridges, and the van of the other in building them up, muſt neceſſarily be accompanied with many intereſting circumſtances.

It was a period of diſtreſſes. A criſis rather of danger than of hope. There is no deſcription can do it juſtice; and even the actors in it, looking back upon the ſcene, are ſurpriſed how they got through; and at a loſs to account for thoſe powers of the mind, and ſprings of animation, by which they withſtood the force of accumulated misfortune.

It was expected, that the time for which the army was inliſted, would carry the campaign ſo far into the winter, that the ſeverity of the ſeaſon, and the conſequent condition of the roads, would prevent any material operation of the enemy, until the new army could be raiſed for the next year. And I mention it, as a matter worthy of attention, by all future hiſtorians, that the movements of the American army, until the attack upon the Heſſian poſt at Trenton, the 26th of December, are to be conſidered as operating to effect

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no other principal purpoſe than delay, and to wear away the campaign under all the diſadvantages of an unequal force, with as little misfortune as poſſible.

But the loſs of the garriſon at fort Waſhington on the 16th of November, and the expiration of the time of a conſiderable part of the army, ſo early as the 30th of the ſame month, and which were to be followed by almoſt daily expirations afterwards, made retreat the only final expedient. To theſe circumſtances may be added the forlorn and deſtitute condition of the few that remained; for the garriſon of Fort Lee, which compoſed almoſt the whole of the retreat, had been obliged to abandon it ſo inſtantaneouſly, that every article of ſtores and baggage was left behind, and in this deſtitute condition, without tent or blanket, and without any other utenſils to dreſs their proviſion, than what they procured by the way, they performed a march of about ninety miles, and had the addreſs and management to prolong it to the ſpace of nineteen days.

By this unexpected or rather unthought of turn of affairs, the country was in an inſtant ſurpriſed into confuſion, and found an enemy within its bowels, without an army to oppoſe him. There were no ſuccours to be had, but from the free-will offering of the inhabitants. All was choice, and every man reaſoned for himſelf.

It was in this ſituation of affairs, equally calculated to confound or to inſpire, that the gentleman, the merchant, the farmer, the tradeſman, and the labourer mutually turned from all the conveniences of home, to perform

perform the duties of private ſoldiers, and undergo the ſeverities of a winter campaign. The delay, ſo judiciouſly contrived on the retreat, afforded time for the volunteer reinforcements to join General Waſhington on the Delaware.

THE Abbe is likewiſe wrong in ſaying, that the American army fell *accidentally* on Trenton. It was the very object for which General Waſhington croſſed the Delaware in the dead of the night and in the midſt of ſnow, ſtorms, and ice; and which he immediately recroſſed with his priſoners, as ſoon as he had accompliſhed his purpoſe. Neither was the intended enterpriſe a ſecret to the enemy, information having been ſent of it by letter, from a Britiſh Officer at Princeton, to Colonel Rolle, who commanded the Heſſians at Trenton, which letter was afterwards found by the Americans. Nevertheleſs the poſt was completely ſurpriſed. A ſmall circumſtance, which had the appearance of miſtake on the part of the Americans, led to a more capital and real miſtake on the part of Rolle.

THE caſe was this. A detachment of twenty or thirty Americans had been ſent acroſs the river from a poſt, a few miles above, by an Officer unacquainted with the intended attack; theſe were met by a body of Heſſians on the night, to which the information pointed, which was Chriſtmas night, and repulſed. Nothing further appearing, and the Heſſians, miſtaking this for the advanced party, ſuppoſed the enterpriſe diſconcerted, which at that time was not began, and under this idea, returned to their quarters; ſo that, what might have raiſed an alarm, and brought the Americans into

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an ambuſcade, ſerved to take off the force of an information, and promote the ſucceſs of the enterpriſe. Soon after day-light General Waſhington entered the town, and after a little oppoſition, made himſelf maſter of it, with upwards of nine hundred priſoners.

THIS combination of equivocal circumſtances, falling within what the Abbe ſtyles "*the wide empire of chance*," would have afforded a fine field for thought, and I wiſh, for the ſake of that elegance of reflection he is ſo capable of uſing, that he had known it.

BUT the action at Princeton was accompanied by a ſtill greater embarraſſment of matters, and followed by more extraordinary conſequences. The Americans, by a happy ſtroke of generalſhip, in this inſtance, not only deranged and defeated all the plans of the Britiſh, in the intended moment of execution, but drew from their poſt the enemy they were not able to drive, and obliged them to cloſe the campaign. As the circumſtance is a curioſity in war, and not well underſtood in Europe, I ſhall, as concifely as I can, relate the principal parts; they may ſerve to prevent future hiſtorians from error, and recover from forgetfulneſs a ſcene of magnificent fortitude.

IMMEDIATELY after the ſurprize of the Heſſians at Trenton, General Waſhington recroſſed the Delaware, which at this place is about three quarters of a mile over, and reaſſumed his former poſt on the Pennſylvania ſide. Trenton remained unoccupied, and the enemy were poſted at Princeton, twelve miles diſtant, on the road towards New-York. The weather was now growing very ſevere, and as there were very few

houſes near the ſhore where General Waſhington had taken his ſtation, the greateſt part of his army remained out in the woods and fields. Theſe, with ſome other circumſtances, induced the recroſſing the Delaware and taking poſſeſſion of Trenton. It was undoubtedly a bold adventure, and carried with it the appearance of defiance, eſpecially when we conſider the panic ſtruck condition of the enemy on the loſs of the Heſſian poſt. But in order to give a juſt idea of the affair, it is neceſſary I ſhould deſcribe the place.

TRENTON is ſituated on a riſing ground, about three quarters of a mile diſtant from the Delaware, on the eaſtern or Jerſey ſide; and is cut into two diviſions by a ſmall creek or rivulet, ſufficient to turn a mill which is on it, after which it empties itſelf at nearly right angles into the Delaware. The upper diviſion which is to the north eaſt, contains about ſeventy or eighty houſes, and the lower about forty or fifty. The ground on each ſide this creek, and on which the houſes are, is likewiſe riſing, and the two diviſions preſent an agreeable proſpect to each other, with the creek between, on which there is a ſmall ſtone bridge of one arch.

SCARCELY had General Waſhington taken poſt here, and before the ſeveral parties of militia, out on detachments, or on their way, could be collected, than the Britiſh, leaving behind them a ſtrong garriſon at Princeton, marched ſuddenly and entered Trenton at the upper or north-eaſt quarter. A party of the Americans ſkirmiſhed with the advanced party of the Britiſh,

tiſh, to afford time for removing the ſtores and baggage, and withdrawing over the bridge.

In a little time the Britiſh had poſſeſſion of one half of the town, General Waſhington of the other, and the creek only ſeparated the two armies. Nothing could be a more critical ſituation than this, and if ever the fate of America depended on the event of a day, it was now. The Delaware was filling faſt with large ſheets of driving ice and was impaſſable, ſo that no retreat into Pennſylvania could be effected, neither is it poſſible, in the face of an enemy, to paſs a river of ſuch extent. The roads were broken and rugged with the froſt, and the main road was occupied by the enemy.

About four o'clock a party of the Britiſh approached the bridge, with a deſign to gain it, but were repulſed. They made no more attempts, though the creek itſelf is paſſable any where between the bridge and the Delaware. It runs in a rugged natural made ditch, over which a perſon may paſs with little difficulty, the ſtream being rapid and ſhallow. Evening was now coming on, and the Britiſh, believing they had all the advantages they could wiſh for, and that they could uſe them when they pleaſed, diſcontinued all further operations, and held themſelves prepared to make the attack next morning.

But the next morning produced a ſcene, as elegant as it was unexpect. The Britiſh were under arms and ready to march to action, when one of their lighthorſe from Princeton came furiouſly down the ſtreet, with an account, that General Waſhington had that morning attacked and carried the Britiſh poſt at that

place, and was proceeding on to ſeize the magazine at Brunſwick; on which the Britiſh, who were then on the point of making an aſſault on the evacuated camp of the Americans, wheeled about, and in a fit of conſternation marched for Princeton.

THIS retreat is one of thoſe extraordinary circumſtances that in future ages may probably paſs for fable. For it will with difficulty be believed, that two armies, on which ſuch important conſequences depended, ſhould be crouded into ſo ſmall a ſpace as Trenton, and that the one, on the eve of an engagement, when every ear is ſuppoſed to be open, and every watchfulneſs employed, ſhould move completely from the ground, with all its ſtores, baggage, and artillery, unknown and even unſuſpected by the other. And ſo entirely were the Britiſh deceived, that when they heard the report of the cannon and ſmall arms at Princeton, they ſuppoſed it to be thunder, though in in the depth of winter.

GENERAL Waſhington, the better to cover and diſiſe his retreat from Trenton, had ordered a line of fires to be lighted up in front of his camp. Theſe not only ſerved to give an appearance of going to reſt, and continuing that deception, but they effectually concealed from the Britiſh whatever was acting behind them, for flame can no more be ſeen through than a wall; and in this ſituation, it may with ſome propriety be ſaid, they became a pillar of fire to the one army, and a pillar of a cloud to the other: after this, by a circuitous march of about eighteen miles, the Americans reached Princeton early in the morning.

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THE number of priſoners taken were between two and three hundred, with which General Waſhington immediately ſet off. The van of the Britiſh army from Trenton entered Princeton about an hour after the Americans had left it, who continuing their march for the remainder of the day, arrived in the evening at a convenient ſituation, wide of the main road to Brunſwick, and about ſixteen miles diſtant from Princeton. But ſo wearied and exhauſted were they with the continual and unabated ſervice and fatigue of two days and a night, from action to action, without ſhelter and almoſt without refreſhment, that the bare and frozen ground, with no other covering than the ſky, became to them a place of comfortable reſt. By theſe two events, and with but little comparative force to accompliſh them, the Americans cloſed with advantages a campaign, which, but a few days before, threatened the country with deſtruction. The Britiſh army, apprehenſive for the ſafety of their magazines at Brunſwick, eighteen miles diſtant, marched immediately for that place, where they arrived late in the evening, and from which they made no attempts to remove for nearly five months.

Having thus ſtated the principal outlines of theſe two moſt intereſting actions, I ſhall now quit them, to put the Abbe right in his miſtated account of the debt and paper money of America, wherein, ſpeaking of theſe matters, he ſays,

"THESE ideal riches were rejected. The more "the multiplication of them was urged by want, the "greater did their depreciation grow. The Congreſs "was

" was indignant at the affronts given to its money, " and declared all thoſe to be enemies to their country " who ſhould not receive it as they would have re- " ceived gold itſelf.

" Did not this body know, that prepoſſeſſions are " no more to be controled than feelings are? Did " it not perceive, that in the preſent criſis every ra- " tional man would be afraid of expoſing his fortune? " Did it not ſee, that at the beginning of a republic it " permitted to itſelf the exerciſe of ſuch acts of deſpo- " tiſm as are unknown even in the countries which " are moulded to, and become familiar with, ſervitude " and oppreſſion? Could it pretend that it did not " puniſh a want of confidence with the pains which " would have been ſcarcely merited by revolt and " treaſon? Of all this was the Congreſs well aware. " But it had no choice of means. Its deſpiſed and " deſpicable ſcraps of paper were actually thirty times " below their original value, when more of them " were ordered to be made. On the 13th of Septem- " ber 1779, there was of this paper money amongſt " the public to the amount of £. 35,544,155. The " ſtate owed moreover £. 8,385,356, without reckon- " ing the particular debts of ſingle provinces."

In the above recited paſſages, the Abbe ſpeaks as if the United States had contracted a debt of upwards of forty millions pounds ſterling, beſides the debts of individual ſtates. After which, ſpeaking of foreign trade with America, he ſays, that " thoſe countries in Eu- " rope which are truly commercial ones, knowing that " North-America had been reduced to contract debts

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" at the epoch of even her greateſt proſperity, wiſely " thought, that, in her preſent diſtreſs, ſhe would be " able to pay but very little, for what might be carried " to her."

I KNOW it muſt be extremely difficult to make foreigners underſtand the nature and circumſtances of our paper money, becauſe there are natives who do not underſtand it themſelves. But with us its fate is now determined. Common conſent has conſigned it to reſt with that kind of regard, which the long ſervice of inanimate things inſenſibly obtains from mankind. Every ſtone in the bridge, that has carried us over, ſeems to have a claim upon our eſteem. But this was a corner ſtone, and its uſefulneſs cannot be forgotten. There is ſomething in a grateful mind, which extends itſelf even to things that can neither be benefited by regard, nor ſuffer by neglect;—But ſo it is; and almoſt every man is ſenſible of the effect.

BUT to return. The paper money, though iſſued from Congreſs under the name of dollars, did not come from that body always at that value. Thoſe which were iſſued the firſt year, were equal to gold and ſilver. The ſecond year leſs, the third ſtill leſs, and ſo on, for nearly the ſpace of five years; at the end of which, I imagine, that the whole value, at which Congreſs might pay away the ſeveral emiſſions, taking them together, was about ten or twelve millions pounds ſterling.

NOW as it would have taken ten or twelve millions ſterling of taxes, to carry on the war for five years, and, as while this money was iſſuing and likewiſe depreciating

preciating down to nothing, there were none, or few valuable taxes paid; conſequently the event to the public was the ſame, whether they ſunk ten or twelve millions of expended money, by depreciation, or paid ten or twelve millions by taxation; for as they did not do both, and choſe to do one, the matter, in a general view, was indifferent. And therefore, what the Abbe ſuppoſes to be a debt, has now no exiſtence; it having been paid by every body conſenting, to reduce at his own expence, from the value of the bills continually paſſing among themſelves, a ſum, equal to nearly what the expence of the war was for five years.

Again. The paper money having now ceaſed, and the depreciation with it, and gold and ſilver ſupplied its place, the war will now be carried on by taxation, which will draw from the public a conſiderable leſs ſum than what the depreciation drew; but as while they pay the former, they do not ſuffer the latter, and as when they ſuffered the latter, they did not pay the former, the thing will be nearly equal, with this moral advantage, that taxation occaſions frugality and thought, and depreciation produced diſſipation and careleſſneſs.

And again. If a man's portion of taxes comes to leſs than what he loſt by the depreciation, it proves the alteration is in his favour. If it comes to more, and he is juſtly aſſeſſed, it ſhows that he did not ſuſtain his proper ſhare of depreciation, becauſe the one was as operatively his tax as the other.

It is true, that it never was intended, neither was it foreſeen, that the debt contained in the paper currency ſhould ſink itſelf in this manner; but as by the voluntary

tary conduct of all and of every one it has arrived at this fate, the debt is paid by thoſe who owed it. Perhaps nothing was ever ſo univerſally the act of a country as this. Government had no hand in it. Every man depreciated his own money by his own conſent, for ſuch was the effect, which the raiſing the nominal value of goods produced. But as by ſuch reduction he ſuſtained a loſs equal to what he muſt have paid to ſink it by taxation, therefore the line of juſtice is to conſider his loſs by the depreciation as his tax for that time, and not to tax him when the war is over, to make that money good in any other perſons hands, which became nothing in his own.

AGAIN. The paper currency was iſſued for the expreſs purpoſe of carrying on the war. It has performed that ſervice, without any other material charge to the public, while it laſted. But to ſuppoſe, as ſome did, that, at the end of the war, it was to grow into gold or ſilver, or become equal thereto, was to ſuppoſe that we were to *get* two hundred millions of dollars by *going to war*, inſtead of *paying* the coſt of carrying it on.

But if any thing in the ſituation of America, as to her currency or her circumſtances, yet remains not underſtood, then let it be remembered, that this war is the public's war; the people's war; the country's war. It is *their* independence that is to be ſupported; *their* property that is to be ſecured; *their* country that is to be ſaved. Here, government, the army, and the people, are mutually and reciprocally one. In other wars, kings may loſe their thrones, and their dominions; but here, the loſs muſt fall on *the majeſty of the multitude*,

and the property they are contending to ſave. Every man being ſenſible of this, he goes to the field, or pays his portion of the charge, as the ſovereign of his own poſſeſſions; and when he is conquered a monarch falls.

THE remark, which the Abbe in the concluſion of the paſſage has made, reſpecting America contracting debts in the time of her proſperity (by which he means, before the breaking out of hoſtilities) ſerves to ſhow, though he has not made the application, the very great commercial difference between a dependent and an independent country. In a ſtate of dependence, and with a fettered commerce, though with all the advantages of peace, her trade could not balance itſelf, and ſhe annually run into debt. But now, in a ſtate of independence, though involved in war, ſhe requires no credit; her ſtores are full of merchandize, and gold and ſilver are become the currency of the country. How theſe things have eſtabliſhed themſelves, it is difficult to account for: But they are facts, and facts are more powerful than arguments.

As it is probable this letter will undergo a re-publication in Europe, the remarks here thrown together will ſerve to ſhow the extreme folly of Britain, in reſting her hopes of ſucceſs on the extinction of our paper currency. The expectation is at once ſo childiſh and forlorn, that it places her in the laughable condition of a famiſhed lion watching for prey at a ſpider's web.

FROM this account of the currency, the Abbe proceeds to ſtate the condition of America in the winter 1777, and the ſpring following; and cloſes his obſervations

vations with mentioning the treaty of alliance, which was ſigned in France, and the propoſitions of the Britiſh Miniſtry, which were rejected in America. But in the manner in which the Abbe has arranged his facts, there is a very material error, that not only he, but other European hiſtorians have fallen into; none of them having aſſigned the true cauſe why the Britiſh propoſals were rejected, and all of them have aſſigned a wrong one.

In the winter 1777, and ſpring following, Congreſs were aſſembled at York-town in Pennſylvania, the Britiſh were in poſſeſſion of Philadelphia, and General Waſhington with the army were encamped in huts at the Valley-Forge, twenty-five miles diſtant therefrom. To all who can remember, it was a ſeaſon of hardſhip, but not of deſpair; and the Abbe, ſpeaking of this period and its inconveniences, ſays,

"A multitude of privations, added to ſo many "other misfortunes, might make the Americans re- "gret their former tranquillity, and incline them to "an accommodation with England. In vain had the "people been bound to the new government by the "ſacredneſs of oaths, and the influence of religion. "In vain had endeavours been uſed to convince them, "that it was impoſſible to treat ſafely with a country "in which one parliament might overturn what ſhould "have been eſtabliſhed by another. In vain had they "been threatened with the eternal reſentment of an "exaſperated and vindictive enemy. It was poſſible "that theſe diſtant troubles might not be balanced by "the weight of preſent evils.

" So thought the Britiſh Miniſtry when they ſent " to the New World public agents, authorized to offer " every thing except independence, to theſe very Ame- " ricans, from whom they had two years before ex- " acted an unconditional ſubmiſſion. It is not im- " probable, but that by this plan of conciliation, a few " months ſooner, ſome effect might have been pro- " duced. But at the period at which it was propoſed " by the Court of London, it was rejected with diſ- " dain, becauſe this meaſure appeared but as an argu- " ment of fear and weakneſs. The people were al- " ready re-aſſured. The Congreſs, the Generals, the " troops, the bold and ſkilful men, in each colony " had poſſeſſed themſelves of the authority; every " thing had recovered its firſt ſpirit. *This was the effect of a treaty of friendſhip and commerce between the United States and the Court of Verſailles, ſigned the 6th of February* 1778."

On this paſſage of the Abbe's I cannot help remarking, that, to unite time with circumſtance, is a material nicety in hiſtory; the want of which frequently throws it into endleſs confuſion and miſtake, occaſions a total ſeparation between cauſes and conſequences, and connects them with others they are not immediately, and ſometimes not at all, related to.

THE Abbe, in ſaying that the offers of the Britiſh Miniſtry " were rejected with diſdain," is *right* as to the *fact*, but *wrong* as to the *time*; and this error in the time has occaſioned him to be miſtaken in the cauſe.

THE ſigning the treaty of Paris the 6th of February 1778, could have no effect on the mind or politics of America

America until it was *known in America*; and therefore, when the Abbe ſays, that the rejection of the Britiſh offers was in conſequence of the alliance, he muſt mean, that it was in conſequence of the alliance *being known* in America; which was not the caſe: And by this miſtake, he not only takes from her the reputation which her unſhaken fortitude in that trying ſituation deſerves, but is likewiſe led very injuriouſly to ſuppoſe, that had ſhe *not known* of the treaty, the offers would probably have been accepted; whereas ſhe knew nothing of the treaty at the time of the rejection, and conſequently did not reject them on that ground.

THE propoſitions or offers above mentioned were contained in two bills brought into the Britiſh Parliament by Lord North on the 17th of February 1778. Thoſe bills were hurried through both houſes with unuſual haſte, and before they had gone through all the cuſtomary forms of Parliament, copies of them were ſent over to Lord Howe and General Howe, then in Philadelphia, who were likewiſe Commiſſioners. General Howe ordered them to be printed in Philadelphia, and ſent copies of them by a flag to General Waſhington, to be forwarded to Congreſs at York-Town, where they arrived the 21ſt of April 1778. Thus much for the arrival of the bills in America.

CONGRESS, as is their uſual mode, appointed a committee from their own body, to examine them and report thereon. The report was brought in the next day (the twenty-ſecond) was read and unanimouſly agreed to, entered on their journals, and publiſhed for the

the information of the country. Now this report muſt be the rejection to which the Abbe alludes, becauſe Congreſs gave no other formal opinion on thoſe bills and propoſitions: And on a ſubſequent application from the Britiſh Commiſſioners, dated the 27th of May, and received at York-Town the 6th of June, Congreſs immediately referred them for an anſwer to their printed reſolves of the 22d of April. Thus much for the rejection of the offers.

On the 2d of May, that is, eleven days after the above rejection was made, the treaty between the United States and France arrived at York-Town; and until this moment Congreſs had not the leaſt notice or idea, that ſuch a meaſure was in any train of execution. But leaſt this declaration of mine ſhould paſs only for aſſertion, I ſhall ſupport it by proof, for it is material to the character and principle of the revolution to ſhow, that no condition of America, ſince the declaration of independence, however trying and ſevere, ever operated to produce the moſt diſtant idea of yielding it up either by force, diſtreſs, artifice, or perſuaſion. And this proof is the more neceſſary, becauſe it was the ſyſtem of the Britiſh miniſtry at this time, as well as before and ſince, to hold out to the European powers that America was unfixt in her reſolutions and policy; hoping by this artifice to leſſen her reputation in Europe, and weaken the confidence which thoſe powers, or any of them, might be inclined to place in her.

At the time theſe matters were tranſacting, I was ſecretary in the foreign department of Congreſs. All the *political* letters from the American Commiſſioners reſted

reſted in my hands, and all that were officially written went from my office; and ſo far from Congreſs knowing any thing of the ſigning the treaty, at the time the rejected the Britiſh offers, they had not received a line of information from their Commiſſioners at Paris on any ſubject whatever for upwards of a twelvemonth. Probably the loſs of the port of Philadelphia and the navigation of the Delaware, together with the danger of the ſeas, covered at this time with Britiſh cruizers, contributed to the diſappointment.

ONE packet, it is true, arrived at York-Town in January preceding, which was above three months before the arrival of the treaty; but, ſtrange as it may appear, every letter had been taken out, before it was put on board the veſſel which brought it from France, and blank white paper put in their ſtead.

HAVING thus ſtated the time when the propoſals from the Britiſh Commiſſioners were firſt received, and likewiſe the time when the treaty of alliance arrived, and ſhewn that the rejection of the former was eleven days prior to the arrival of the latter, and without the leaſt knowledge of ſuch circumſtance having taken place or being about to take place; the rejection, therefore, muſt, and ought to be attributed to the fixt unvaried ſentiments of America reſpecting the enemy ſhe is at war with, and her determination to ſupport her independence to the laſt poſſible effort, and not to any new circumſtance in her favour, which at that time ſhe did not and could not know of.

BESIDES, there is a vigour of determination and ſpirit of defiance in the language of the rejection, (which I here ſubjoin) which derive their greateſt glory

glory by appearing before the treaty was known; for that, which is bravery in diſtreſs becomes inſult in proſperity: and the treaty placed America on ſuch a ſtrong foundation, that had ſhe then known it, the anſwer which ſhe gave, would have appeared rather as an air of triumph, than as the glowing ſerenity of fortitude.

UPON the whole, the Abbe appears to have entirely miſtaken the matter; for inſtead of attributing the rejection of the propoſitions to *our knowledge* of the treaty of alliance; he ſhould have attributed the origin of them in the Britiſh cabinet, to *their knowledge* of that event. And then the reaſon why they were hurried over to America in the ſtate of bills, that is, before they were paſſed into acts, is eaſily accounted for, which is, that they might have the chance of reaching America before any knowledge of the treaty ſhould arrive, which they were lucky enough to do, and there met the fate they ſo richly merited. That theſe bills were brought into the Britiſh Parliament after the treaty with France was ſigned, is proved from the dates: the treaty being on the 6th, and the bills the 17th of February. And that the ſigning the treaty was known in Parliament, when the bills were brought in, is likewiſe proved by a ſpeech of Mr. Charles Fox, on the ſaid 17th of February, who, in reply to Lord North, informed the Houſe of the treaty being ſigned, and challenged the Miniſter's knowledge of the ſame fact*.

THOUGH

* IN CONGRESS, April 22, 1778.

"THE Committee to whom was referred the General's letter of the 18th, containing a certain printed paper ſent from

THOUGH I am not ſurpriſed to ſee the Abbe miſtaken in matters of hiſtory, acted at ſo great a diſtance from his

from Philadelphia, purporting to be the draught of a Bill for declaring the *intentions* of the Parliament of Great Britain, as to the *exerciſe* of what they are pleaſed to term their *right* of impoſing taxes within theſe United States; and alſo the draught of a Bill to enable the King of Great Britain to appoint Commiſſioners, with powers to treat, conſult, and agree upon the means of quieting certain diſorders within the ſaid States, beg leave to obſerve,

"That the ſaid paper being induſtriouſly circulated by emiſſaries of the enemy, in a partial and ſecret manner, the ſame ought to be forthwith printed for the public information.

"The Committee cannot aſcertain whether the contents of the ſaid paper have been framed in Philadelphia or in Great Britain, much leſs whether the ſame are really and truly intended to be brought into the Parliament of that kingdom, or whether the ſaid Parliament will confer thereon the uſual ſolemnities of their laws. But are inclined to believe this will happen, for the following reaſons:

"1ſt. Becauſe their General hath made divers feeble efforts to ſet on foot ſome kind of treaty during the laſt winter, though, either from a miſtaken idea of his own dignity and importance, the want of information, or ſome other cauſe, he hath not made application to thoſe who are inveſted with a proper authority.

"2dly. Becauſe they ſuppoſe that the fallacious idea of a ceſſation of hoſtilities will render theſe States remiſs in their preparations for war.

"3dly. Becauſe believing the Americans wearied with war, they ſuppoſe we will accede to the terms for the ſake of peace.

"4thly. Becauſe they ſuppoſe that our negociations may be ſubject to a like corrupt influence with their debates.

"5thly. Becauſe they expect from this ſtep the ſame effects they did from what one of their miniſters thought proper to call his *conciliatory motion*, viz. that it will prevent foreign powers from giving aid to theſe States; that it will lead their own ſubject to continue a little longer the preſent

his ſphere of immediate obſervation, yet I am more than ſurpriſed to find him wrong, (or at leaſt what appears ſo to me) in the well enlightened field of philoſophical

war; and that it will detach ſome weak men in America from the cauſe of freedom and virtue.

" 6thly. Becauſe their King, from his own ſhewing, hath reaſon to apprehend that his fleets and armies, inſtead of being employed againſt the territories of theſe States, will be neceſſary for the defence of his own dominions. And

" 7thly. Becauſe the impracticability of ſubjugating this country being every day more and more manifeſt, it is their intereſt to extricate themſelves from the war upon any terms.

" The Committee beg leave further to obſerve, That, upon a ſuppoſition, the matters contained in the ſaid paper will really go into the Britiſh Statute Book, they ſerve to ſhew, in a clear point of view, the weakneſs and wickedneſs of the enemy.

" THEIR WEAKNESS,

" 1ſt. Becauſe they formerly declared, not only that they had a right to bind the inhabitants of theſe States in all caſes whatſoever, but alſo that the ſaid inhabitants ſhould *abſolutely* and *unconditionally* ſubmit to the exerciſe of that right. And this ſubmiſſion they have endeavoured to exact by the ſword. Receding from this claim, therefore, under the preſent circumſtance, ſhews their inability to enforce it.

" 2dly. Becauſe their Prince hath heretofore rejected the humbleſt petitions of the Repreſentatives of America, praying to be conſidered as ſubjects, and protected in the enjoyment of peace, liberty, and ſafety; and hath waged a moſt cruel war againſt them, and employed the ſavages to butcher innocent women and children. But now the ſame Prince pretends to treat with thoſe very Repreſentatives, and grant to the *arms* of America what he refuſed to her *prayers*.

" 3dly. Becauſe they have uniformly laboured to conquer this continent, rejecting every idea of accommodation propoſed to them, from a confidence in their own ſtrength. Wherefore it is evident, from the change in their mode of attack, that they have loſt this confidence. And

" 4thly. Becauſe the conſtant language, ſpoken not only by their Miniſters, but by the moſt public and authentic acts of

loſophical reflection. Here the materials are his own; created by himſelf; and the error, therefore, is an act of the mind.

HITHERTO

of the nation, hath been, that it is incompatible with their dignity to treat with the Americans while they have arms in their hands. Notwithſtanding which, an offer is now about to be made for treaty.

" The wickedneſs and inſincerity of the enemy appear from the following conſiderations:

" 1ſt. Either the *Bills* now to be paſſed contain a direct or indirect ceſſion of a part of their former claims, or they do not. If they do, then it is acknowledged that they have ſacrificed many brave men in an unjuſt quarrel. If they do not, then they are calculated to deceive America into terms, to which neither argument before the war, nor force ſince, could procure her aſſent.

" 2dly. The firſt of theſe *Bills* appears, from the title, to be a declaration of the *intentions* of the Britiſh Parliament concerning the exerciſe of the *right of impoſing taxes* within theſe States. Wherefore, ſhould theſe States treat under the ſaid Bill, they would *indirectly* acknowledge that right, to obtain which acknowledgment the preſent war hath been avowedly undertaken and proſecuted on the part of Great Britain.

" 3dly. Should ſuch pretended right be ſo acquieſced in, then of conſequence the ſame might be exerciſed whenever the Britiſh Parliament ſhould find themſelves of different *temper* and *diſpoſition*; ſince it muſt depend upon thoſe, and ſuch like contingencies, how far men will act according to their former *intentions*.

" 4thly. The ſaid firſt Bill, in the body thereof, containeth no new matter, but is preciſely the ſame with the motion before mentioned, and liable to all the objections which lay againſt the ſaid motion, excepting the following particular, viz. that *by the motion* actual taxation was to be ſuſpended, ſo long as America ſhould give as much as the ſaid Parliament might think proper: whereas *by the propoſed Bill*, it is to be ſuſpended as long as future Parliaments continue of the ſame mind with the preſent.

HITHERTO my remarks hav been confined to circumſtances; the order in which they aroſe, and the events

" 5thly. From the ſecond Bill it appears, that the Britiſh King may, if he pleaſes, appoint Commiſſioners to *treat* and *agree* with thoſe, whom they pleaſe, about a variety of things therein mentioned. But ſuch treaties and agreements are to be of no validity without the concurrence of the ſaid Parliament, except ſo far as they relate to the *ſuſpenſion* of hoſtilities, and of certain of their acts, the granting of pardons, and the appointment of Governors to theſe ſovereign, free, and independent States. Wherefore, the ſaid Parliament have reſerved to themſelves, in *expreſs words*, the power of ſetting aſide any ſuch treaty, and taking the advantage of any circumſtances which may ariſe to ſubject this continent to their uſurpations.

" 6thly. The ſaid Bill, by holding forth a tender of pardon, implies a criminality in our juſtifiable reſiſtance, and conſequently, to treat under it would be an implied acknowledgment, that the inhabitants of theſe States were, what Britain has declared them to be, *Rebels*.

" 7thly. The inhabitants of theſe States being claimed by them as ſubjects, they may infer, from the nature of the negociation now pretended to be ſet on foot, that the ſaid inhabitants would of right be afterwards bound by ſuch laws as they ſhould make. Wherefore any agreement entered into on ſuch negociation might at any future time be repealed. And

" 8thly. Becauſe the ſaid Bill purports, that the Commiſſioners therein mentioned may treat with private individuals; a meaſure highly derogatory to the dignity of the national character.

" From all which it appears evident to your Committee, that the ſaid Bills are intended to operate upon the hopes and fears of the good people of theſe States, ſo as to create diviſions among them, and a defection from the common cauſe, now by the bleſſing of Divine Providence drawing near to a favourable iſſue. That they are the ſequel of that inſidious plan, which, from the days of the Stamp-act down to the preſent time, hath involved this country in contention and bloodſhed. And that, as in other caſes ſo in this, although circumſtances may force them at times to recede from their unjuſtifiable

events they produced. In theſe, my information being better than the Abbe's, my taſk was eaſy. How I may ſucceed in controverting matters of ſentiment and opinion, with one whom years, experience, and long eſtabliſhed reputation have placed in a ſuperior line, I am leſs confident in; but as they fall within the ſcope of

juſtifiable claims, there can be no doubt but they will as heretofore, upon the firſt favourable occaſion, again diſplay that luſt of domination, which hath rent in twain the mighty empire of Britain.

"Upon the whole matter, the Committee beg leave to report it as their opinion, That the Americans united in this arduous conteſt upon principles of common intereſt, for the defence of common rights and privileges, which union hath been cemented by common calamities, and by mutual good offices and affection, ſo the great cauſe for which they contend, and in which all mankind are intereſted, muſt derive its ſucceſs from the continuance of that union. Wherefore any man or body of men, who ſhould preſume to make any ſeparate or partial convention or agreement with Commiſſioners under the Crown of Great Britain, or any of them, ought to be conſidered and treated as open and avowed enemies of theſe United States.

"And further, your Committee beg leave to report it as their opinion, That theſe United States cannot, with propriety, hold any conference or treaty with *any* Commiſſioners on the part of Great Britain, unleſs they ſhall, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or elſe, in poſitive and expreſs terms, acknowledge the Independence of the ſaid States.

"And inaſmuch as it appears to be the deſign of the enemies of theſe States to lull them into a fatal ſecurity—to the end that they may act with a becoming weight and importance, it is the opinion of your Committee, That the ſeveral States be called upon to uſe the moſt ſtrenuous exertions to have their reſpective quotas of continental troops in the field as ſoon as poſſible, and that all the militia of the ſaid States be held in readineſs, to act as occaſion may require."

The

of my obſervations, it would be improper to paſs them over.

FROM this part of the Abbe's work to the latter end, I find ſeveral expreſſions, which appear to me to ſtart, with a cynical complexion, from the path of liberal thinking, or at leaſt they are ſo involved as to loſe many of the beauties which diſtinguiſh other parts of the performance.

THE Abbe having brought his work to the period when the treaty of alliance between France and the

The following is the anſwer of Congreſs to the ſecond application of the Commiſſioners:

York-Town, June 6, 1778.

SIR,

"I HAVE had the honour of laying your letter of the 3d inſtant, with the acts of the Britiſh Parliament which came incloſed, before Congreſs; and I am inſtructed to acquaint you, Sir, that they have already expreſſed their ſentiments upon bills, not eſſentially different from thoſe acts, in a publication of the 22d of April laſt.

"Be aſſured, Sir, when the King of Great Britain ſhall be ſeriouſly diſpoſed to put an end to the unprovoked and cruel war waged againſt theſe United States, Congreſs will readily attend to ſuch terms of peace, as may conſiſt with the honour of independent nations, the intereſt of their conſtituents, and the ſacred regard they mean to pay to treaties. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your moſt obedient, and moſt humble ſervant,
HENRY LAURENS,
Preſident of Congreſs."

His Excellency,
Sir Henry Clinton, K. B. Philad.

United

United States commenced, proceeds to make ſome remarks thereon.

" In ſhort," ſays he, " philoſophy, whoſe firſt ſen-
" timent is the deſire to ſee all governments juſt, and
" all people happy, in caſting her eyes upon this
" alliance of a monarchy, with a people, who are de-
" fending their liberty, *is curious to know its motive.*
" *She ſees, at once, too clearly, that the happineſs of man-*
" *kind has no part in it.*"

Whatever train of thinking or temper the Abbe might be in, when he penned this expreſſion, matters not. They will neither qualify the ſentiment, nor add to its defect. If right, it needs no apology; if wrong, it merits no excuſe. It is ſent into the world as an opinion of philoſophy, and may be examined without regard to the author.

It ſeems to be a defect, connected with ingenuity, that it often employs itſelf more in matters of curioſity, than uſefulneſs. Man muſt be the privy counſellor of fate, or ſomething is not right. He muſt know the ſprings, the whys and wherefores of every thing, or he ſits down unſatisfied. Whether this be a crime, or only a caprice of humanity, I am not enquiring into. I ſhall take the paſſage as I find it, and place my objections againſt it.

It is not ſo properly the *motives* which *produced* the alliance, as the *conſequences* which are to be *produced from it*, that mark out the field of philoſophical reflection. In the one we only penetrate into the barren cave of ſecrecy, where little can be known, and every thing may be miſconceived; in the other, the mind is preſented with a wide extended proſpect of vegetative

vegetative good, and ſees a thouſand bleſſings budding into exiſtence.

But the expreſſion, even within the compaſs of the Abbe's meaning, ſets out with an error, becauſe it is made to declare that, which no man has authority to declare. Who can ſay that the happineſs of mankind made *no part of the motives* which produced the alliance? To be able to declare this, a man muſt be poſſeſſed of the mind of all the parties concerned, and know that their motives were ſomething elſe.

In proportion as the independence of America became contemplated and underſtood, the local advantages of it to the immediate actors, and the numerous benefits it promiſed to mankind, appeared to be every day increaſing; and we ſaw not a temporary good for the preſent race only, but a continued good to all poſterity; theſe motives, therefore, added to thoſe which preceded them, became the motives on the part of America, which led her to propoſe and agree to the treaty of alliance, as the beſt effectual method of extending and ſecuring happineſs; and therefore, with reſpect to us, the Abbe is wrong.

France, on the other hand, was ſituated very differently to America. She was not acted upon by neceſſity to ſeek a friend, and therefore her motive in becoming one, has the ſtrongeſt evidence of being good, and that which is ſo, muſt have ſome happineſs for its object. With regard to herſelf, ſhe ſaw a train of conveniences worthy her attention. By leſſening the power of an enemy, whom, at the ſame time, ſhe fought neither to deſtroy nor diſtreſs, ſhe gained an advantage

vantage without doing an evil, and created to herſelf a new friend by aſſociating with a country in misfortune. The ſprings of thought that lead to actions of this kind, however political they may be, are nevertheleſs naturally beneficent; for in all cauſes, good or bad, it is neceſſary there ſhould be a fitneſs in the mind, to enable it to act in character with the object: Therefore as a bad cauſe cannot be proſecuted with a good motive, ſo neither can a good cauſe be long ſupported by a bad one, and as no man acts without a motive, therefore in the preſent inſtance, as they cannot be bad, they muſt be admitted to be good. But the Abbe ſets out upon ſuch an extended ſcale, that he overlooks the degrees by which it is meaſured, and rejects the beginning of good, becauſe the end comes not at once.

It is true that bad motives may in ſome degree be brought to ſupport a od cauſe or proſecute a good object; but it never ues long, which is not the caſe with France; for either the object will reform the mind, or the mind corrupt the object, or elſe not being able, either way, to get into uniſon, they will ſeparate in diſguſt: And this natural, though unperceived, progreſs of aſſociation or contention between the mind and the object, is the ſecret cauſe of fidelity or defection. Every object a man purſues, is, for the time, a kind of miſtreſs to his mind: if both are good or bad, the union is natural; but if they are in reverſe, and neither can ſeduce nor yet reform the other, the oppoſition grows into diſlike, and a ſeparation follows.

WHEN the cauſe of America firſt made her appearance on the ſtage of the univerſe, there were many, who, in the ſtyle of adventurers and fortune-hunters, were dangling in her train, and making their court to her with every profeſſion of honour and attachment. They were loud in her praiſe and oſtentatious in her ſervice. Every place echoed with their ardour or their anger, and they ſeemed like men in love. But, alas, they were fortune-hunters. Their expectations were excited, but their minds were unimpreſſed; and finding her not to their purpoſe, nor themſelves reformed by her influence, they ceaſed their ſuit, and in ſome inſtances deſerted and betrayed her.

THERE were others, who at firſt beheld her with indifference, and unacquainted with her character were cautious of her company. They treated her as one, who, under the fair name of liberty, might conceal the hideous figure of anarchy, or the gloomy monſter of tyranny. They knew not what ſhe was. If fair, ſhe was fair indeed. But ſtill ſhe was ſuſpected, and though born among us, appeared to be a ſtranger.

ACCIDENT with ſome, and curioſity with others, brought on a diſtant acquaintance. They ventured to look at her. They felt an inclination to ſpeak to her. One intimacy led to another, till the ſuſpicion wore away, and a change of ſentiment ſtole gradually upon the mind; and having no ſelf-intereſt to ſerve, no paſſion of diſhonour to gratify, they became enamoured of her innocence, and unaltered by misfortune or uninflamed by ſucceſs, ſhared with fidelity in the varieties of her fate.

THIS

THIS declaration of the Abbe's, reſpecting motives, has led me unintendedly into a train of metaphyſical reaſoning; but there was no other avenue by which it could ſo properly be approached. To place preſumption againſt preſumption, aſſertion againſt aſſertion, is a mode of oppoſition that has no effect; and therefore the more eligible method was, to ſhew that the declaration does not correſpond with the natural progreſs of the mind, and the influence it has upon our conduct.—I ſhall now quit this part, and proceed to what I have before ſtated, namely, that it is not ſo properly the motives which produced the alliance, as the conſequences to be produced from it, that mark out the field of philoſophical reflection.

IT is an obſervation I have already made in ſome former publication, that the circle of civilization is yet incomplete. A mutuality of wants have formed the individuals of each country into a kind of national ſociety; and here the progreſs of civilization has ſtopt. For it is eaſy to ſee, that nations with regard to each other (notwithſtanding the ideal civil law which every one explains as it ſuits him) are like individuals in a ſtate of nature. They are regulated by no fixt principle, governed by no compulſive law, and each does independently what it pleaſes, or what it can.

WERE it poſſible we could have known the world when in a ſtate of barbariſm, we might have concluded that it never could be brought into the order we now ſee it. The untamed mind was then as hard, if not harder, to work upon in its individual ſtate, than the national mind is in its preſent one. Yet we have ſeen

the accompliſhment of the one, why then ſhould we doubt that of the other?

THERE is a greater fitneſs in mankind to extend and complete the civilization of nations with each other at this day, than there was to begin it with the unconnected individuals at firſt; in the ſame manner that it is ſomewhat eaſier to put together the materials of a machine after they are formed, than it was to form them from original matter. The preſent condition of the world differing ſo exceedingly from what it formerly was, has given a new caſt to the mind of man, more than what he appears to be ſenſible of. The want of the individual, which firſt produced the idea of ſociety, are now augmented into the wants of the nation, and he is obliged to ſeek from another country, what before he ſought from the next perſon.

LETTERS, the tongue of the world, have in ſome meaſure brought all mankind acquainted, and, by an extenſion of their uſes, are every day promoting ſome new friendſhip. Through them, diſtant nations become capable of converſation, and loſing by degrees the awkwardneſs of ſtrangers, and the moroſeneſs of ſuſpicion, they learn to know and underſtand each other. Science, the partiſan of no country, but the beneficent patroneſs of all, has liberally opened a temple where all may meet. Her influence on the mind, like the ſun on the chilled earth, has long been preparing it for higher cultivation, and further improvement. The philoſopher of one country ſees not an enemy in the philoſopher of another: He takes his ſeat in the temple of ſcience, and aſks not who ... beſide him.

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THIS was not the condition of the barbarian world. Then the wants of man were few, and the objects within his reach. While he could acquire these, he lived in a state of individual independence, the consequence of which was, there were as many nations as persons, each contending with the other, to secure something which he had, or to obtain something which he had not. The world had then no business to follow, no studies to exercise the mind. Their time was divided between sloth and fatigue. Hunting and war were their chief occupations; sleep and food their principal enjoyments.

NOW it is otherwise. A change in the mode of life has made it necessary to be busy; and man finds a thousand things to do now which before he did not. Instead of placing his ideas of greatness in the rude atchievements of the savage, he studies arts, science, agriculture, and commerce, the refinements of the gentleman, the principles of society, and the knowledge of the philosopher.

THERE are many things which in themselves are morally neither good nor bad, but they are productive of consequences, which are strongly marked with one or other of these characters. Thus commerce, though in itself a moral nullity, has had a considerable influence in tempering the human mind. It was the want of objects in the ancient world, which occasioned in them such a rude and perpetual turn for war. Their time hung on their hands without the means of employment. The indolence they lived in afforded leisure for mischief, and being all idle at once, and equal

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in their circumſtances, they were eaſily provoked or induced to action.

But the introduction of commerce furniſhed the world with objects, which, in their extent, reach every man, and give him ſomething to think about and ſomething to do; by theſe his attention is mechanically drawn from the purſuits which a ſtate of indolence and an unemployed mind occaſioned, and he trades with the ſame countries which former ages, tempted by their productions, and too indolent to purchaſe them, would have gone to war with.

Thus, as I have already obſerved, the condition of the world being materially changed by the influence of ſcience and commerce, it is put into a fitneſs not only to admit of, but to deſire, an extenſion of civilization. The principal and almoſt only remaining enemy it now has to encounter, is *prejudice*; for it is evidently the intereſt of mankind to agree and make the beſt of life. The world has undergone its diviſions of empire, the ſeveral boundaries of which are known and ſettled. The idea of conquering countries, like the Greeks and Romans, does not now exiſt; and experience has exploded the notion of going to war for the ſake of profit. In ſhort, the objects for war are exceedingly diminiſhed, and there is now left ſcarcely any thing to quarrel about, but what ariſes from that demon of ſociety, prejudice, and the conſequent ſullenneſs and untractableneſs of the temper.

There is ſomething exceedingly curious in the conſtitution and operation of prejudice. It has the ſingular ability of accommodating itſelf to all the poſſible

ſible varieties of the human mind. Some paſſions and vices are but thinly ſcattered among mankind, and find only here and there a fitneſs of reception. But prejudice, like the ſpider, makes every where its home. It has neither taſte nor choice of place, and all that it requires is room. There is ſcarcely a ſituation, except fire or water, in which a ſpider will not live. So, let the mind be as naked as the walls of an empty and forſaken tenement, gloomy as a dungeon, or ornamented with the richeſt abilities of thinking, let it be hot, cold, dark or light, lonely or inhabited, ſtill prejudice, if undiſturbed, will fill it with cobwebs, and live, like the ſpider, where there ſeems nothing to live on. If the one prepares her food by poiſoning it to her palate and her uſe, the other does the ſame; and as ſeveral of our paſſions are ſtrongly characſtered by the animal world, prejudice may be denominated the ſpider of the mind.

PERHAPS no two events ever united ſo intimately and forceably to combat and expel prejudice, as the Revolution of America and the Alliance with France. Their effects are felt, and their influence already extends as well to the old world as the new. Our ſtyle and manner of thinking have undergone a revolution, more extraordinary than the political revolution of the country. We ſee with other eyes; we hear with other ears; and think with other thoughts, than thoſe we formerly uſed. We can look back on our own prejudices, as if they had been the prejudices of other people. We now ſee and know they were prejudices and nothing elſe, and relieved from their ſhackles, enjoy a freedom of mind we felt not before. It was not all

all the argument, however powerful, nor all the reaſoning, however elegant, that could have produced this change, ſo neceſſary to the extenſion of the mind and the cordiality of the world, without the two circumſtances of the Revolution and the Alliance.

HAD America dropt quietly from Britain, no material change in ſentiment had taken place. The ſame notions, prejudices, and conceits, would have governed in both countries, as governed them before, and ſtill the ſlaves of error and education, they would have travelled on in the beaten track of vulgar and habitual thinking. But brought about by the means it has been, both with regard to ourſelves, to France, and to England, every corner of the mind is ſwept of its cobwebs, poiſon and duſt, and made fit for the reception of generous happineſs.

PERHAPS there never was an Alliance on a broader baſis, than that between America and France, and the progreſs of it is worth attending to. The countries had been enemies, not properly of themſelves, but through the medium of England. They, originally, had no quarrel with each other, nor any cauſe for one, but what aroſe from the intereſt of England and her arming America againſt France. At the ſame time, the Americans, at a diſtance from and unacquainted with the world, and tutored in all the prejudices which governed thoſe who governed them, conceived it their duty to act as they were taught. In doing this, they expended their ſubſtance to make conqueſts, not for themſelves but for their maſters, who in return treated them as ſlaves.

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A LONG ſucceſſion of inſolent ſeverity, and the ſeparation finally occaſioned by the commencement of hoſtilities at Lexington, on the 19th of April 1775, naturally produced a new diſpoſition of thinking. As the mind cloſed itſelf towards England, it opened itſelf towards the world; and our prejudices, like our oppreſſions, underwent, though leſs obſerved, a mental examination; until we found the former as inconſiſtent with reaſon and benevolence, as the latter were repugnant to our civil and political rights.

WHILE we were thus advancing by degrees into the wide field of extended humanity, the alliance with France was concluded; an Alliance not formed for the mere purpoſe of a day, but on juſt and generous grounds, and with equal and mutual advantages; and the eaſy affectionate manner in which the parties have ſince communicated, has made it an alliance not of courts only, but of countries. There is now an union of mind as well as of intereſt; and our hearts, as well as our proſperity, call on us to ſupport it.

THE people of England not having experienced this change, had likewiſe no idea of it. They were hugging to their boſoms the ſame prejudices we were trampling beneath our feet; and they expected to keep a hold upon America, by that narrowneſs of thinking, which America diſdained. What they were proud of, we deſpiſed; and this is a principal cauſe why all their negociations, conſtructed on this ground, have failed. We are now really another people, and cannot again go back to ignorance and prejudice. The mind once enlightened cannot again become dark. There is no

poſſibility, neither is there any term to expreſs the ſuppoſition by, of the mind *un*knowing any thing it already knows; and therefore all attempts on the part of England, fitted to the former habit of America, and on the expectation of their applying now, will be like perſuading a ſeeing man to become blind, and a ſenſible one to turn an ideot. The firſt of which is unnatural, and the other impoſſible.

As to the remark which the Abbe makes of the one country being a monarchy and the other a republic, it can have no eſſential meaning. Forms of government have nothing to do with treaties. The former are the internal police of the countries ſeverally; the latter, their external police jointly: and ſo long as each performs its part, we have no more right or buſineſs to know how the one or the other conducts its domeſtic affairs, than we have to enquire into the private concerns of a family.

But had the Abbe reflected for a moment, he would have ſeen, that courts, or the governing powers of all countries, be their forms what they may, are relatively republics with each other. It is the firſt and true principle of alliancing. Antiquity may have given precedence, and power will naturally create importance, but their equal right is never diſputed. It may likewiſe be worthy of remarking, that a monarchical country can ſuffer nothing in its popular happineſs by allying with a republican one; and republican governments have never been deſtroyed by their external connections, but by ſome internal convulſion or contrivance. France has been in alliance with the republic of

of Swiſſerland for more than two hundred years, and ſtill Swiſſerland retains her original form as entire as if ſhe had allied with a republic like herſelf; therefore this remark of the Abbe goes to nothing.—Beſides, it is beſt that mankind ſhould mix. There is ever ſomething to learn, either of manners or principle; and it is by a free communication, without regard to domeſtic matters, that friendſhip is to be extended, and prejudice deſtroyed all over the world.

But notwithſtanding the Abbe's high profeſſions in favour of liberty, he appears ſometimes to forget himſelf, or that his theory is rather the child of his fancy than of his judgment: for in almoſt the ſame inſtant that he cenſures the alliance as not originally or ſufficiently calculated for the happineſs of mankind, he, by a figure of implication, accuſes France for having acted ſo generouſly and unreſervedly in concluding it. "Why did they (ſays he, meaning the Court of "France) tie themſelves down by an inconſiderate "treaty to conditions with the Congreſs, which they "might themſelves have held in dependence by ample "and regular ſupplies."

When an author undertakes to treat of public happineſs, he ought to be certain that he does not miſtake paſſion for right, nor imagination for principle. Principle, like truth, needs no contrivance. It will ever tell its own tale, and tell it the ſame way. But where this is not the caſe, every page muſt be watched, recollected, and compared, like an invented ſtory.

I am ſurprized at this paſſage of the Abbe. It means nothing, or it means ill; and in any caſe it

ſhews the great difference between ſpeculative and practical knowledge. A treaty, according to the Abbe's language, would have neither duration nor affection; it might have laſted to the end of the war, and then expired with it.—But France, by acting in a ſtyle ſuperior to the little politics of narrow thinking, has eſtabliſhed a generous fame, and won the love of a country ſhe was before a ſtranger to. She had to treat with a people who thought as nature taught them; and, on her own part, ſhe wiſely ſaw, there was no preſent advantage to be obtained by unequal terms, which could balance the more laſting ones that might flow from a kind and generous beginning.

FROM this part the Abbe advances into the ſecret tranſactions of the two Cabinets of Verſailles and Madrid reſpecting the independence of America; through which I mean not to follow him. It is a circumſtance ſufficiently ſtriking without being commented on, that the former union of America with Britain produced a power, which, in her hands, was becoming dangerous to the world: and there is no improbability in ſuppoſing, that had the latter known as much of the ſtrength of the former before ſhe began the quarrel, as ſhe has known ſince, that inſtead of attempting to reduce her to unconditional ſubmiſſion, ſhe would have propoſed to her the conqueſt of Mexico. But from the countries ſeparately Spain has nothing to apprehend, though from their union ſhe had more to fear than any other power in Europe.

THE part which I ſhall more particularly confine myſelf to, is that wherein the Abbe takes an opportunity

nity of complimenting the Britiſh Miniſtry with high encomiums of admiration, on their rejecting the offered mediation of the Court of Madrid, in 1779.

It muſt be remembered, that before Spain joined France in the war, ſhe undertook the office of a mediator, and made propoſals to the Britiſh King and Miniſtry ſo exceedingly favourable to their intereſt, that had they been accepted, would have become inconvenient, if not inadmiſſible, to America. Theſe propoſals were nevertheleſs rejected by the Britiſh Cabinet; on which the Abbe ſays,—

"It is in ſuch a circumſtance as this; it is in the "time when noble pride elevates the ſoul ſuperior to "all terror; when nothing is ſeen more dreadful than "the ſhame of receiving the law, and when there is "no doubt or heſitation which to chuſe, between ruin "and diſhonour; it is then, that the greatneſs of a "nation is diſplayed. I acknowledge however, that "men, accuſtomed to judge of things by the event, "call great and perilous reſolutions, heroiſm or mad-"neſs, according to the good or bad ſucceſs with which "they have been attended. If then, I ſhould be aſked, "what is the name which ſhall in years to come be "given to the firmneſs, which was in this moment "exhibited by the Engliſh, I ſhall anſwer that I do "not know. But that which it deſerves, I know. I "know that the annals of the world hold out to us but "rarely, the auguſt and majeſtic ſpectacle of a nation, "which chuſes rather to renounce its duration than its "glory."

In this paragraph the conception is lofty, and the expreſſion elegant; but the colouring is too high for the original,

original, and the likeneſs fails through an exceſs of graces. To fit the powers of thinking and the turn of language to the ſubject, ſo as to bring out a clear concluſion that ſhall hit the point in queſtion and nothing elſe, is the true criterion of writing. But the greater part of the Abbe's writings (if he will pardon me the remark) appear to me uncentral and burthened with variety. They repreſent a beautiful wilderneſs without paths; in which the eye is diverted by every thing, without being particularly directed to any thing; and in which it is agreeable to be loſt, and difficult to find the way out.

BEFORE I offer any other remark on the ſpirit and compoſition of the above paſſage, I ſhall compare it with the circumſtance it alludes to.

THE circumſtance then does not deſerve the encomium. The rejection was not prompted by her fortitude, but her vanity. She did not view it as a caſe of deſpair, or even of extreme danger, and conſequently the determination to renounce her duration rather than her glory, cannot apply to the condition of her mind. She had then high expectations of ſubjugating America, and had no other naval force againſt her than France; neither was ſhe certain that rejecting the mediation of Spain would combine that power with France. New mediations might ariſe more favourable than thoſe ſhe had refuſed. But if they ſhould not, and Spain ſhould join, ſhe ſtill ſaw that it would only bring out her naval force againſt France and Spain, which was not wanted and could not be employed againſt America, and habits of

of thinking had taught her to believe herſelf ſuperior to both.

But in any caſe to which the conſequence might point, there was nothing to impreſs her with the idea of renouncing her duration. It is not the policy of Europe to ſuffer the extinction of any power, but only to lop off or prevent its dangerous encreaſe. She was likewiſe freed by ſituation from the internal and immediate horrors of invaſion; was rolling in diſſipation and looking for conqueſts; and though ſhe ſuffered nothing but the expence of war, ſhe ſtill had a greedy eye to magnificent reimburſement.

But if the Abbe is delighted with high and ſtriking ſingularities of character, he might, in America, have found ample field for encomium. Here was a people, who could not know what part the world would take for, or againſt them; and who were venturing on an untried ſcheme, in oppoſition to a power, againſt which more formidable nations had failed. They had every thing to learn but the principles which ſupported them, and every thing to procure that was neceſſary for their defence. They have at times ſeen themſelves as low as diſtreſs could make them, without ſhewing the leaſt ſtagger in their fortitude; and been raiſed again by the moſt unexpected events, without diſcovering an unmanly diſcompoſure of joy. To heſitate or to deſpair are conditions equally unknown in America. Her mind was prepared for every thing; becauſe her original and final reſolution of ſucceeding or periſhing, included all poſſible circumſtances.

The

THE rejection of the Britiſh propoſitions in the year 1778, circumſtanced as America was at that time, is a far greater inſtance of unſhaken fortitude than the refuſal of the Spaniſh mediation by the Court of London: And other hiſtorians, beſides the Abbe, ſtruck with the vaſtneſs of her conduct therein, have, like himſelf, attributed it to a circumſtance which was then unknown, the alliance with France. Their error ſhews their idea of its greatneſs; becauſe, in order to account for it, they have ſought a cauſe ſuited to its magnitude, without knowing that the cauſe exiſted in the principles of the country*.

BUT this paſſionate encomium of the Abbe is deſervedly ſubject to moral and philoſophical objections. It is the effuſion of wild thinking, and has a tendency to prevent that humanity of reflection which the criminal conduct of Britain enjoins on her as a duty.—It is a laudanum to courtly iniquity.—It keeps in intoxicated ſleep the conſcience of a nation; and more miſ-

* Extract from "*A ſhort review of the preſent reign*" in England.

Page 45, *in the New Annual Regiſter for the year* 1780.

"*THE Commiſſioners, who, in conſequence of Lord North's* "*conciliatory bills, went over to America, to propoſe terms of peace* "*to the colonies, were wholly unſucceſsful. The conceſſions which* "*formerly would have been received with the utmoſt gratitude,* "*were rejected with diſdain. Now was the time of American* "*pride and haughtineſs. It is probable, however, that it was not* "*pride and haughtineſs alone that dictated the Reſolutions of* "*Congreſs, but a diſtruſt of the ſincerity of the offers of Britain,* "*a determination not to give up their independence, and,* ABOVE "ALL, THE ENGAGEMENTS INTO WHICH THEY HAD EN- "TERED BY THEIR LATE TREATY WITH FRANCE.

chief

chief is effected by wrapping up guilt in ſplendid excuſe, than by directly patronizing it.

BRITAIN is now the only country which holds the world in diſturbance and war; and inſtead of paying compliments to the exceſs of her crimes, the Abbe would have appeared much more in character, had he put to her, or to her monarch, this ſerious queſtion—

ARE there not miſeries enough in the world, too difficult to be encountered, and too pointed to be borne, without ſtudying to enlarge the liſt and arming it with new deſtruction? Is life ſo very long, that it is neceſſary, nay even a duty, to ſhake the ſand and haſten out the period of duration? Is the path ſo elegantly ſmooth, ſo decked on every ſide and carpeted with joys, that wretchedneſs is wanted to enrich it as a foil? Go aſk thine aching heart when ſorrow from a thouſand cauſes wound it, go aſk thy ſickened ſelf, when every medicine fails, whether this be the caſe or not?

QUITTING my remarks on this head, I proceed to another, in which the Abbe has let looſe a vein of ill-nature, and, what is ſtill worſe, of injuſtice.

AFTER cavilling at the treaty, he goes on to characterize the ſeveral parties combined in the war—"Is it poſſible," ſays the Abbe, "that a ſtrict union ſhould "long ſubſiſt amongſt confederates of characters ſo "oppoſite as the haſty, light, diſdainful Frenchman, "the jealous, haughty, ſly, ſlow, circumſpective "Spaniard, and the American, who is ſecretly ſnatch-"ing looks at the mother country, and would rejoice, "were they compatible with his independence, at the "diſaſters of his allies."

To draw fooliſh portraits of each other, is a mode of attack and repriſal, which the greater part of mankind are fond of indulging. The ſerious philoſopher ſhould be above it, more eſpecially in caſes from which no poſſible good can ariſe, and miſchief may, and where no received provocation can palliate the offence.—The Abbe might have invented a difference of character for every country in the world, and they in return might find others for him, till in the war of wit all real character is loſt. The pleaſantry of one nation or the gravity of another may, by a little pencilling, be diſtorted into whimſical features, and the painter become as much laughed at as the painting.

But why did not the Abbe look a little deeper and bring forth the excellencies of the ſeveral parties? Why did he not dwell with pleaſure on that greatneſs of character, that ſuperiority of heart, which has marked the conduct of France in her conqueſts, and which has forced an acknowledgment even from Britain?

There is one line, at leaſt, (and many others might be diſcovered) in which the confederates unite, which is, that of a rival eminence in their treatment of their enemies. Spain, in her conqueſt of Minorca and the Bahama iſlands confirms this remark. America has been invariable in her lenity from the beginning of the war, notwithſtanding the high provocations ſhe has experienced? It is England only who has been inſolent and cruel.

But why muſt America be charged with a crime undeſerved by her conduct, more ſo by her principles, and

and which, if a fact would be fatal to her honour? I mean that of want of attachment to her allies, or rejoicing in their diſaſters. She, it is true, has been aſſiduous in ſhewing to the world that ſhe was not the aggreſſor towards England, that the quarrel was not of her ſeeking, or, at that time, even of her wiſhing. But to draw inferences from her candour, and even from her juſtification, to ſtab her character by, and I ſee nothing elſe from which they can be ſuppoſed to be drawn, is unkind and unjuſt.

Does her rejection of the Britiſh propoſitions in 1778, before ſhe knew of any alliance with France, correſpond with the Abbe's deſcription of her mind? does a ſingle inſtance of her conduct ſince that time juſtify it?—But there is a ſtill better evidence to apply to, which is, that of all the mails, which at different times have been way-laid on the road, in divers parts of America, and taken and carried into New-York, and from which the moſt ſecret and confidential private letters, as well as thoſe from authority, have been publiſhed, not one of them, I repeat it, not a ſingle one of them, gives countenance to ſuch a charge.

This is not a country where men are under government reſtraint in ſpeaking; and if there is any kind of reſtraint, it ariſes from a fear of popular reſentment. Now, if nothing in her private or public correſpondence favours ſuch a ſuggeſtion, and if the general diſpoſition of the country is ſuch as to make it unſafe for a man to ſhew an appearance of joy at any diſaſter to her ally, on what grounds, I aſk, can the accuſation ſtand? What company the Abbe may have kept in

France, we cannot know; but this we know, that the account he gives does not apply to America.

HAD the Abbe been in America at the time the news arrived of the diſaſter of the fleet under Count de Graſſe, in the Weſt-Indies, he would have ſeen his vaſt miſtake. Neither do I remember any inſtance, except the loſs of Charleſtown, in which the public mind ſuffered more ſevere and pungent concern, or underwent more agitations of hope and apprehenſion as to the truth or falſehood of the report. Had the loſs been all our own, it could not have had a deeper effect, yet it was not one of theſe caſes which reached to the independence of America.

IN the geographical account which the Abbe gives of the Thirteen States, he is ſo exceedingly erroneous, that to attempt a particular refutation, would exceed the limits I have preſcribed to myſelf. And as it is a matter neither political, hiſtorical, nor ſentimental, and which can always be contradicted by the extent and natural circumſtances of the country, I ſhall paſs it over; with this additional remark, that I never yet ſaw an European deſcription of America that was true, neither can any perſon gain a juſt idea of it, but by coming to it.

THOUGH I have already extended this letter beyond what I at firſt propoſed, I am, nevertheleſs, obliged to omit many obſervations, I originally deſigned to have made. I wiſh there had been no occaſion for making any. But the wrong ideas which the Abbe's work had a tendency to excite, and the prejudicial impreſſions they

they might make, muſt be an apology for my remarks, and the freedom with which are done.

I OBSERVE the Abbe has made a ſort of epitome of a conſiderable part of the pamphlet *Common Senſe*, and introduced it in that form into his publication. But there are other places where the Abbe has borrowed freely from the ſame pamphlet without acknowledging it. The difference between ſociety and government, with which the pamphlet opens, is taken from it, and in ſome expreſſions almoſt literally, into the Abbe's work, as if originally his own; and through the whole of the Abbe's remarks on this head, the idea in Common Senſe is ſo cloſely copied and purſued, that the difference is only in words, and in the arrangement of the thoughts, and not in the thoughts themſelves *.

BUT as it is time I ſhould come to a concluſion of my letter, I ſhall forbear all further obſervations on the Abbe's work, and take a conciſe view of the ſtate of

* COMMON SENSE.

"Some writers have ſo confounded ſociety with government, as to leave little or no diſtinction between them; whereas, they are not only different, but have different origins.

"Society is produced by our wants, and governments by our wickedneſs; the former promotes our happineſs *poſitively*, by uniting our affections; the latter *negatively*, by reſtraining our vices."

, ABBE RAYNAL.

"Care muſt be taken not to confound together ſociety with government. That they may be known diſtinctly, their origin ſhould be conſidered.

"Society originates in the wants of men, government in their vices. Society tends always to good; government ought always to tend to the repreſſing of evil."

In

of public affairs, ſince the time in which that performance was publiſhed.

A MIND

In the following paragraphs there is leſs likeneſs in the language, but the ideas in the one are evidently copied from the other.

COMMON SENSE.

" In order to gain a clear and juſt idea of the deſign and end of government, let us ſuppoſe a ſmall number of perſons meeting in ſome ſequeſtered part of the earth unconnected with the reſt; they will then repreſent the peopling of any country or of the world. In this ſtate of natural liberty, ſociety will be our firſt thought. A thouſand motives will excite them thereto. The ſtrength of one man is ſo unequal to his wants, and his mind ſo unfitted for prepetual ſolitude, that he is ſoon obliged to ſeek aſſiſtance of another, who, in his turn, requires the ſame. Four or five united would be able to raiſe a tolerable dwelling in the midſt of a wilderneſs; but *one* man might labour out the common period of life, without accompliſhing any thing; when he had felled his timber he could not remove it, nor erect it after it was removed; hunger, in the mean time, would urge him from his work, and every different want call him a different way. Diſeaſe, nay

ABBE RAYNAL.

" Man, thrown as it were by chance upon the globe, ſurrounded by all the evils of nature, obliged continually to defend and protect his life againſt the ſtorms and tempeſts of the air, againſt the inundations of water, againſt the fire of volcanoes, againſt the intemperance of frigid and torrid zones, againſt the ſterility of the earth, which refuſes him aliment, or its baneful fecundity, which makes poiſon ſpring up beneath his feet; in ſhort, againſt the claws and teeth of ſavage beaſts, who diſpute with him his habitation and his prey, and, attacking his perſon, ſeem reſolved to render themſelves rulers of this globe, of which he thinks himſelf to be the maſter: Man, in this ſtate, alone and abandoned to himſelf, could do nothing for his preſervation. It was neceſſary, therefore, that he ſhould unite himſelf, and aſſociate with his like, in order to bring together their ſtrength and intelligence in common ſtock. It is by this union that he has triumphed

A MIND habited to meanneſs and injuſtice, commits them without reflection, or with a very partial one; for on what other ground than this, can we account for the declaration of war againſt the Dutch. To gain an idea of the politics which actuated the Britiſh Miniſtry to this meaſure, we muſt enter into the opinion which they, and the Engliſh in general, had formed of the temper of the Dutch nation; and

COMMON SENSE,

nay even misfortune, would be death; for though neither might be immediately mortal, yet either of them would diſable him from living, and reduce him to a ſtate in which he might rather be ſaid to periſh than die.—Thus neceſſity, like a gravitating power, would form our newly arrived emigrants into ſociety, the reciprocal bleſſings of which would ſuperſede and render the obligations of law and government unneceſſary, while they remained perfectly juſt to each other. But as nothing but heaven is impregnable to vice, it will unavoidably happen, that in proportion as they ſurmount the firſt difficulties of emigration, which bound them together in a common cauſe, they will begin to relax in their duty and attachment to each other, and this remiſſneſs will point out the neceſſity of eſtabliſhing ſome form of government to ſupply the defect of moral virtue."

ABBE RAYNAL.

triumphed over ſo many evils, that he has faſhioned this globe to his uſe, reſtrained the rivers, ſubjugated the ſeas, inſured his ſubſiſtence, conquered a part of the animals in obliging them to ſerve him, and driven others far from his empire, to the depth of deſerts or of woods, where their number diminiſhes from age to age. What a man alone would not have been able to effect, men have executed in concert; and altogether they preſerve their work. Such is the origin, ſuch the advantages, and the end of ſociety. —Government owes its birth to the neceſſity of preventing and repreſſing the injuries which the aſſociated individuals had to fear from one another. It is the centinel who watches, in order that the common labours be not diſturbed."

from

from thence infer what their expectation of the conſequences would be.

COULD they have imagined that Holland would have ſeriouſly made a common cauſe with France, Spain, and America, the Britiſh Miniſtry would never have dared to provoke them. It would have been a madneſs in politics to have done ſo; unleſs their views were to haſten on a period of ſuch emphatic diſtreſs, as ſhould juſtify the conceſſions which they ſaw they muſt one day or other make to the world, and for which they wanted an apology to themſelves.—There is a temper in ſome men which ſeeks a pretence for ſubmiſſion. Like a ſhip diſabled in action and unfitted to continue it, it waits the approach of a ſtill larger one to ſtrike to, and feels relief at the opportunity. Whether this is greatneſs or littleneſs of mind, I am not enquiring into. I ſhould ſuppoſe it to be the latter, becauſe it proceeds from the want of knowing how to bear misfortune in its original ſtate.

BUT the ſubſequent conduct of the Britiſh cabinet has ſhewn that this was not their plan of politics, and conſequently their motives muſt be ſought for in another line.

THE truth is, that the Britiſh had formed a very humble opinion of the Dutch nation. They looked on them as a people who would ſubmit to any thing; that they might inſult them as they liked, plunder them as they pleaſed, and ſtill the Dutch dared not to be provoked.

IF this be taken as the opinion of the Britiſh cabinet, the meaſure is eaſily accounted for; becauſe it goes

goes on the ſuppoſition, that when, by a declaration of hoſtilities, they had robbed the Dutch of ſome millions ſterling, (and to rob them was popular) they could make peace with them again whenever they pleaſed, and on almoſt any terms the Britiſh Miniſtry ſhould propoſe. And no ſooner was the plundering committed, than the accomodation was ſet on foot, and failed.

When once the mind loſes the ſenſe of its own dignity, it loſes, likewiſe, the ability of judging of it in another. And the American war has thrown Britain into ſuch a variety of abſurd ſituations, that, arguing from herſelf, ſhe ſees not in what conduct national dignity conſiſts in other countries. From Holland ſhe expected duplicity and ſubmiſſion, and this miſtake aroſe from her having acted, in a number of inſtances during the preſent war, the ſame character herſelf.

To be allied to, or connected with Britain, ſeems to be an unſafe and impolitic ſituation. Holland and America are inſtances of the reality of this remark. Make thoſe countries the allies of France or Spain, and Britain will court them with civility, and treat them with reſpect; make them her own allies, and ſhe will inſult and plunder them. In the firſt caſe, ſhe feels ſome apprehenſions at offending them, becauſe they have ſupport at hand; in the latter, thoſe apprehenſions do not exiſt. Such, however, has hitherto been her conduct.

Another meaſure which has taken place ſince the publication of the Abbe's work, and likewiſe ſince the time of my beginning this letter, is the change in the Britiſh miniſtry. What line the new cabinet will pur-

ſue reſpecting America, is at this time unknown; neither is it very material, unleſs they are ſeriouſly diſpoſed to a general and honourable peace.

REPEATED experience has ſhewn, not only the impracticability of conquering America, but the ſtill higher impoſſibility of conquering her mind, or recalling her back to her former condition of thinking. Since the commencement of the war, which is now approaching to eight years, thouſands and tens of thouſands have advanced, and are daily advancing into the firſt ſtage of manhood, who know nothing of Britain but as a barbarous enemy, and to whom the independence of America appears as much the natural and eſtabliſhed government of the country, as that of England does to an Engliſhman. And on the other hand, thouſands of the aged, who had Britiſh ideas, have dropped, and are daily dropping, from the ſtage of buſineſs and life. The natural progreſs of generation and decay operates every hour to the diſadvantage of Britain. Time and death, hard enemies to contend with, fight conſtantly againſt her intereſt; and the bills of mortality, in every part of America, are the thermometers of her decline. The children in the ſtreets are from their cradle bred to conſider her as their only foe. They hear of her cruelties; of their fathers, uncles, and kindred killed; they ſee the remains of burnt and deſtroyed houſes, and the common tradition of the ſchool they go to, tells them, *thoſe things were done by the Britiſh.*

THESE are circumſtances which the mere Engliſh ſtate politician, who conſiders man only in a ſtate of manhood,

manhood, does not attend to. He gets entangled with parties coeval or equal with himſelf at home, and thinks not how faſt the riſing generation in America is growing beyond his knowledge of them, or they of him. In a few years all perſonal remembrance will be loſt, and who is King or Miniſter in England, will be little known and ſcarcely enquired after.

THE new Britiſh adminiſtration is compoſed of perſons who have ever been againſt the war, and who have conſtantly reprobated all the violent meaſures of the former one. They conſidered the American war as deſtructive to themſelves, and oppoſed it on that ground. But what are theſe things to America? She has nothing to do with Engliſh parties. The ins and the outs are nothing to her. It is the whole country ſhe is at war with, or muſt be at peace with.

WERE every Miniſter in England a *Chatham*, it would now weigh little or nothing in the ſcale of American politics. Death has preſerved to the memory of this ſtateſman, *that fame*, which he, by living, would have loſt. His plans and opinions, towards the latter part of his life, would have been attended with as many evil conſequences, and as much reprobated here, as thoſe of Lord North; and, conſidering him a wiſe man, they abound with inconſiſtences amounting to abſurdities.

IT has apparently been the fault of many in the late minority, to ſuppoſe, that America would agree to certain terms with them, were they in place, which ſhe would not ever liſten to from the then adminiſtration. This idea can anſwer no other purpoſe than to prolong

the war; and Britain may, at the expence of many more millions, learn the fatalityof ſuch miſtakes. If the new miniſtry wiſely avoid this hopeleſs policy, they will prove themſelves better pilots, and wiſer men than they are conceived to be; for it is every day expected to ſee their bark ſtrike upon ſome hidden rock and go to pieces.

But there is a line in which they may be great. A more brilliant opening needs not to preſent itſelf; and it is ſuch a one as true magnanimity would improve, and humanity rejoice in.

A total reformation is wanted in England. She wants an expanded mind,—an heart which embraces the univerſe. Inſtead of ſhutting herſelf up in an iſland, and quarrelling with the world, ſhe would derive more laſting happineſs, and acquire more real riches, by generouſly mixing with it, and bravely ſaying, I am the enemy of none. It is not now a time for little contrivances, or artful politics. The European world is too experienced to be impoſed upon, and America too wiſe to be duped. It muſt be ſomething new and maſterly that muſt ſucceed. The idea of ſeducing America from her independence, or corrupting her from her alliance, is a thought too little for a great mind, and impoſſible for any honeſt one to attempt. Whenever politics are applied to debauch mankind from their integrity, and diſſolve the virtues of human nature, they become deteſtable; and to be a ſtateſman upon this plan, is to be a commiſſioned villain. He who aims at it, leaves a vacancy in his character, which may be filled up by the worſt of epithets.

If

If the diſpoſition of England ſhould be ſuch, as not to agree to a general and honourable peace, and that the war muſt, at all events, continue longer, I cannot help wiſhing, that the alliances which America has or may enter into, may become the only objects of the war. She wants an opportunity of ſhewing to the world, that ſhe holds her honour as dear and ſacred as her independence, and that ſhe will in no ſituation forſake thoſe, whom no negociations could induce to forſake her. Peace to every reflective mind is a deſirable object; but *that peace* which is accompanied with a ruined character, becomes a crime to the ſeducer, and a curſe upon the ſeduced.

But where is the impoſſibility, or even the great difficulty, of England forming a friendſhip with France and Spain, and making it a national virtue to renounce for ever thoſe prejudiced inveteracies it has been her cuſtom to cheriſh; and which, while they ſerve to ſink her with an encreaſing enormity of debt, by involving her in fruitleſs wars, become likewiſe the bane of her repoſe, and the deſtruction of her manners? We had once the fetters that ſhe has now, but experience has ſhewn us the miſtake, and thinking juſtly has ſet us right.

The true idea of a great nation is that which extends and promotes the principles of univerſal ſociety. Whoſe mind riſes above the atmoſpheres of local thoughts, and conſiders mankind, of whatever nation or profeſſion they may be, as the work of one Creator. The rage for conqueſt has had its faſhion, and its day. Why may not the amiable virtues have the ſame? The

Alexanders

Alexanders and Cæſars of antiquity, have left behind them their monuments of deſtruction, and are remembered with hatred; while theſe more exalted characters, who firſt taught ſociety and ſcience, are bleſt with the gratitude of every age and country. Of more uſe was *one* philoſopher, though a heathen, to the world, than all the heathen conquerors that ever exiſted.

SHOULD the preſent revolution be diſtinguiſhed by opening a new ſyſtem of extended civilization, it will receive from heaven the higheſt evidence of approbation; and as this is a ſubject to which the Abbe's powers are ſo eminently ſuited, I recommend it to his attention, with the affection of a friend, and the ardour of a univerſal citizen.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE closing the foregoing letter, some intimations, respecting a general peace, have made their way to America. On what authority or foundation they stand, or how near or remote such an event may be, are circumstances I am not enquiring into. But as the subject must sooner or later become a matter of serious attention, it may not be improper, even at this early period, candidly to investigate some points that are connected with it, or lead towards it.

THE independence of America is at this moment as firmly established as that of any other country in a state of war. It is not length of time, but power, that gives stability. Nations at war know nothing of each other on the score of antiquity. It is their present and immediate strength, together with their connections, that must support them. To which we may add, that a right which originated to-day, is as much a right, as if it had the sanction of a thousand years; and therefore the independence and present governments of America are in no more danger of being subverted, because they are modern, than that of England is secure, because it is ancient.

THE politics of Britain, so far as they respected America, were originally conceived in idiotism, and acted in madness. There is not a step which bears the smallest trace of rationality. In her management of the war, she has laboured to be wretched, and studied

to

to be hated; and in all her former propoſitions for accommodation, ſhe has diſcovered a total ignorance of mankind, and of thoſe natural and unalterable ſenſations by which they are ſo generally governed. How ſhe may conduct herſelf in the preſent or future buſineſs of negociating a peace, is yet to be proved.

He is a weak politician who does not underſtand human nature, and penetrate into the effect which meaſures of government will have upon the mind. All the miſcarriages of Britain have ariſen from this defect. The former Miniſtry acted as if they ſuppoſed mankind to be *without a mind*; and the preſent Miniſtry, as if America was *without a memory*. The one muſt have ſuppoſed we were incapable of feeling; and the other, that we could not remember injuries.

There is likewiſe another line in which politicians miſtake, which is that of not rightly calculating, or rather of misjudging, the conſequence which any given circumſtance will produce. Nothing is more frequent, as well in common as in political life, than to hear people complain, that ſuch or ſuch means produced an event directly contrary to their intentions. But the fault lies in their not judging rightly what the event would be; for the means produced only its proper and natural conſequence.

It is very probable, that in a treaty for peace, Britain will contend for ſome poſt or other in North America; perhaps Canada or Halifax, or both: and I infer this from the known deficiency of her politics, which have ever yet made uſe of means, whoſe natural event was againſt both her intereſt and her expectation.

But

But the queſtion wit. her ought to be, Whether it is worth her while to hold them, and what will be the conſequence.

RESPECTING Canada, one or other of the two following will take place, viz. If Canada ſhould people, it will revolt; and if it do not people, it will not be worth the expence of holding. And the ſame may be ſaid of Halifax, and the country round it. But Canada *never will* people; neither is there any occaſion for contrivances on one ſide or the other, for nature alone will do the whole.

BRITAIN may put herſelf to great expences in ſending ſettlers to Canada; but the deſcendants of thoſe ſettlers will be Americans, as other deſcendants have been before them. They will look round and ſee the neighbouring States ſovereign and free, reſpected abroad and trading at large with the world; and the natural love of liberty, the advantages of commerce, the bleſſings of independence and of a happier climate, and a richer ſoil, will draw them ſouthward, and the effect will be, that Britain will ſuſtain the expence, and America reap the advantage.

ONE would think that the experience which Britain has had of America, would entirely ſicken her of all thoughts of continental colonization; and any part which ſhe might retain, will only become to her a field of jealouſy and thorns, of debate and contention, for ever ſtruggling for privileges, and meditating revolt. She may form new ſettlements, but they will be for us; they will become part of the United States of America; and that againſt all her contrivances to pre-

vent it, or without any endeavours of ours to promote it. In the firſt place, ſhe cannot draw from them a revenue until they are able to pay one, and when they are ſo, they will be above ſubjection. Men ſoon become attached to the ſoil they live upon, and incorporated with the proſperity of the place; and it ſignifies but little what opinions they come over with, for time, intereſt, and new connections will render them obſolete, and the next generation know nothing of them.

WERE Britain truly wiſe ſhe would lay hold of the preſent opportunity to diſentangle herſelf from all continental embarraſſments in North America, and that not only to avoid future broils and troubles, but to ſave expences. For to ſpeak explicitly on the matter, I would not, were I an European power, have Canada, under the conditions that Britain muſt retain it, could it be given to me. It is one of thoſe kind of dominions that is, and ever will be, a conſtant charge upon any foreign holder.

As to Halifax, it will become uſeleſs to England after the preſent war, and the loſs of the United States. A harbour, when the dominion is gone, for the purpoſe of which only it was wanted, can be attended only with expence. There are, I doubt not, thouſands of people in England, who ſuppoſe, that thoſe places are a profit to the nation, whereas they are directly the contrary, and inſtead of producing any revenue, a conſiderable part of the revenue of England is annually drawn off, to ſupport the expence of holding them.

GIBRALTAR

GIBRALTAR is another inſtance of national ill policy. A poſt which, in time of peace, is not wanted, and in time of war is of no uſe, muſt at all times be uſeleſs. Inſtead of affording protection to a navy, it requires the aid of one to maintain it. And to ſuppoſe that Gibraltar commands the Mediterranean, or the paſs into it, or the trade of it, is to ſuppoſe a detected falſhood; becauſe though Britain holds the poſt, ſhe has loſt the other three, and every benefit ſhe expected from it. And to ſay that all this happens becauſe it is beſieged by land and water, is to ſay nothing, for this will always be the caſe in time of war, while France and Spain keep up ſuperior fleets, and Britain holds the place.—So that, though as an impenetrable inacceſſible rock it may be held by the one, it is always in the power of the other to render it uſeleſs and exceſſively chargeable.

I SHOULD ſuppoſe that one of the principal objects of Spain in beſieging it, is to ſhow to Britain, that though ſhe may not take it, ſhe can command it, that is, ſhe can ſhut it up, and prevent its being uſed as a harbour, though not a garriſon.—But the ſhort way to reduce Gibraltar, is, to attack the Britiſh fleet; for Gibraltar is as dependent on a fleet for ſupport, as a bird is on its wing for food, and when wounded there it ſtarves.

THERE is another circumſtance which the people of England have not only not attended to, but ſeem to be utterly ignorant of, and that is, the difference between permanent power, and accidental power, conſidered in a national ſenſe.

By permanent power, I mean, a natural inherent and perpetual ability in a nation, which though always in being, may not be always in action, or not always advantageouſly directed; and by accidental power, I mean, a fortunate or accidental diſpoſition or exerciſe of national ſtrength, in whole or in part.

There undoubtedly was a time when any one European nation, with only eight or ten ſhips of war, equal to the preſent ſhips of the line, could have carried terror to all others, who had not began to build a navy, however great their natural ability might be for that purpoſe: but this can be conſidered only as accidental, and not as a ſtandard to compare permanent power by, and could laſt no longer than until thoſe powers built as many or more ſhips than the former. After this a larger fleet was neceſſary, in order to be ſuperior; and a ſtill larger would again ſuperſede it. And thus mankind have gone on building fleet upon fleet, as occaſion or ſituation dictated. And this reduces it to an original queſtion, which is: Which power can build and man the largeſt number of ſhips? The natural anſwer to which, is, That power which has the largeſt revenue and the greateſt number of inhabitants, provided its ſituation of coaſt affords ſufficient conveniencies.

France being a nation on the continent of Europe, and Britain an iſland in its neighbourhood, each of them derived different ideas from their different ſituations. The inhabitants of Britain could carry on no foreign trade, nor ſtir from the ſpot they dwelt upon,

on, without the aſſiſtance of ſhipping; but this was not the caſe with France. The idea therefore of a navy did not ariſe to France from the ſame original and immediate neceſſity which produced it to England. But the queſtion is, that when both of them turn their attention, and employ their revenues the ſame way, which can be ſuperior?

THE annual revenue of France is nearly double that of England, and her number of inhabitants more than twice as many. Each of them has the ſame length of coaſt on the channel, beſides which, France has ſeveral hundred miles extent on the Bay of Biſcay, and an opening on the Mediterranean: and every day proves, that practice and exerciſe makes ſailors, as well as ſoldiers, in one country as well as another.

IF then Britain can maintain an hundred ſhips of the line, France can as well ſupport an hundred and fifty, becauſe her revenues and her population are as equal to the one as thoſe of England are to the other. And the only reaſon why ſhe has not done it, is becauſe ſhe has not till lately attended to it. But when ſhe ſees, as ſhe now ſees, that a navy is the firſt engine of power, ſhe can eaſily accompliſh it.

ENGLAND very falſely, and ruinouſly for herſelf, infers, that becauſe ſhe had the advantage of France, while France had the ſmaller navy, that for that reaſon it is always to be ſo. Whereas it may be clearly ſeen, that the ſtrength of France has never yet been tried on a navy, and that ſhe is able to be as ſuperior to England in the extent of a navy, as ſhe is in the extent of

of her revenues and her population. And England may lament the day when, by her inſolence and injuſtice, ſhe provoked in France a maritime diſpoſition.

It is in the power of the combined fleets to conquer every iſland in the Weſt Indies, and reduce all the Britiſh navy in thoſe places. For were France and Spain to ſend their whole naval force in Europe to thoſe iſlands, it would not be in the power of Britain to follow them with an equal force. She would ſtill be twenty or thirty ſhips inferior, were ſhe to ſend every veſſel ſhe had; and in the mean time all the foreign trade of England would lay expoſed to the Dutch.

It is a maxim, which, I am perſuaded, will ever hold good, and more eſpecially in naval operations, that a great power ought never to move in detachments, if it can poſſibly be avoided; but to go with its whole force to ſome important object, the reduction of which ſhall have a deciſive effect upon the war. Had the whole of the French and Spaniſh fleets in Europe come laſt ſpring to the Weſt Indies, every iſland had been their own, Rodney their priſoner, and his fleet their prize. From the United States the combined fleets can be ſupplied with proviſions, without the neceſſity of drawing them from Europe, which is not the caſe with England.

Accident has thrown ſome advantages in the way of England, which, from the inferiority of her navy, ſhe had not a right to expect. For though ſhe has been obliged to fly before the combined fleets, yet

Rodney

Rodney has twice had the fortune to fall in with detached ſquadrons, to which he was ſuperior in numbers: The firſt off Cape St. Vincent, where he had nearly two to one; and the other in the Weſt Indies, where he had a majority of ſix ſhips. Victories of this kind almoſt produce themſelves. They are won without honour, and ſuffered without diſgrace; and are aſcribable to the chance of meeting, not to the ſuperiority of fighting: For the ſame Admiral, under whom they were obtained, was unable, in three former engagements, to make the leaſt impreſſion on a fleet conſiſting of an equal number of ſhips with his own, and compounded for the events by declining the actions *.

To conclude, if it may be ſaid that Britain has numerous enemies, it likewiſe proves that ſhe has given numerous offences. Inſolence is ſure to provoke hatred, whether in a nation or an individual. The want of manners in the Britiſh Court may be ſeen even in its birth-days and new-years Odes, which are calculated to infatuate the vulgar, and diſguſt the man of refinement: and her former overbearing rudeneſs, and inſufferable injuſtice on the ſeas, have made every commercial nation her foe. Her fleets were employed as engines of prey; and acted on the ſurface of the deep the character which the ſhark does beneath it.—On the other hand, the Combined Powers are taking

* *See the accounts, either Engliſh or French, of three actions in the Weſt Indies between Count de Guichen and Admiral Rodney, in* 1780.

a popular

a popular part, and will render their reputation immortal, by eſtabliſhing the perfect freedom of the ocean, to which all countries have a right, and are intereſted in accompliſhing. The ſea is the world's highway; and he who arrogates a prerogative over it, tranſgreſſes the right, and juſtly brings on himſelf the chaſtiſement of nations.

PERHAPS it might be of ſome ſervice to the future tranquillity of mankind, were an article introduced into the next general peace, that no one nation ſhould, in time of peace, exceed a certain number of ſhips of war. Something of this kind ſeems neceſſary; for, according to the preſent faſhion, half the world will get upon the water, and there appears no end to the extent to which navies may be carried. Another reaſon is, that navies add nothing to the manners or morals of a people. The ſequeſtered life which attends the ſervice, prevents the opportunities of ſociety, and is too apt to occaſion a coarſeneſs of ideas and language, and that more in ſhips of war than in commercial employ; becauſe in the latter they mix more with the world, and are nearer related to it. I mention this remark as a general one, and not applied to any one country more than another.

BRITAIN has now had the trial of above ſeven years, with an expence of nearly an hundred million pounds ſterling; and every month in which ſhe delays to conclude a peace, coſts her another million ſterling, over and above her ordinary expences of government, which are a million more; ſo that her total *monthly* expence is

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two million pounds ſterling, which is equal to the whole *yearly* expence of America, all charges included. Judge then who is beſt able to continue it.

SHE has likewiſe many atonements to make to an injured world, as well in one quarter as another. And inſtead of purſuing that temper of arrogance, which ſerves only to ſink her in the eſteem, and entail on her the diſlike of all nations, ſhe will do well to reform her manners, retrench her expences, live peaceably with her neighbours, and think of war no more.

Philadelphia, Auguſt 21, 1782.

FINIS.